







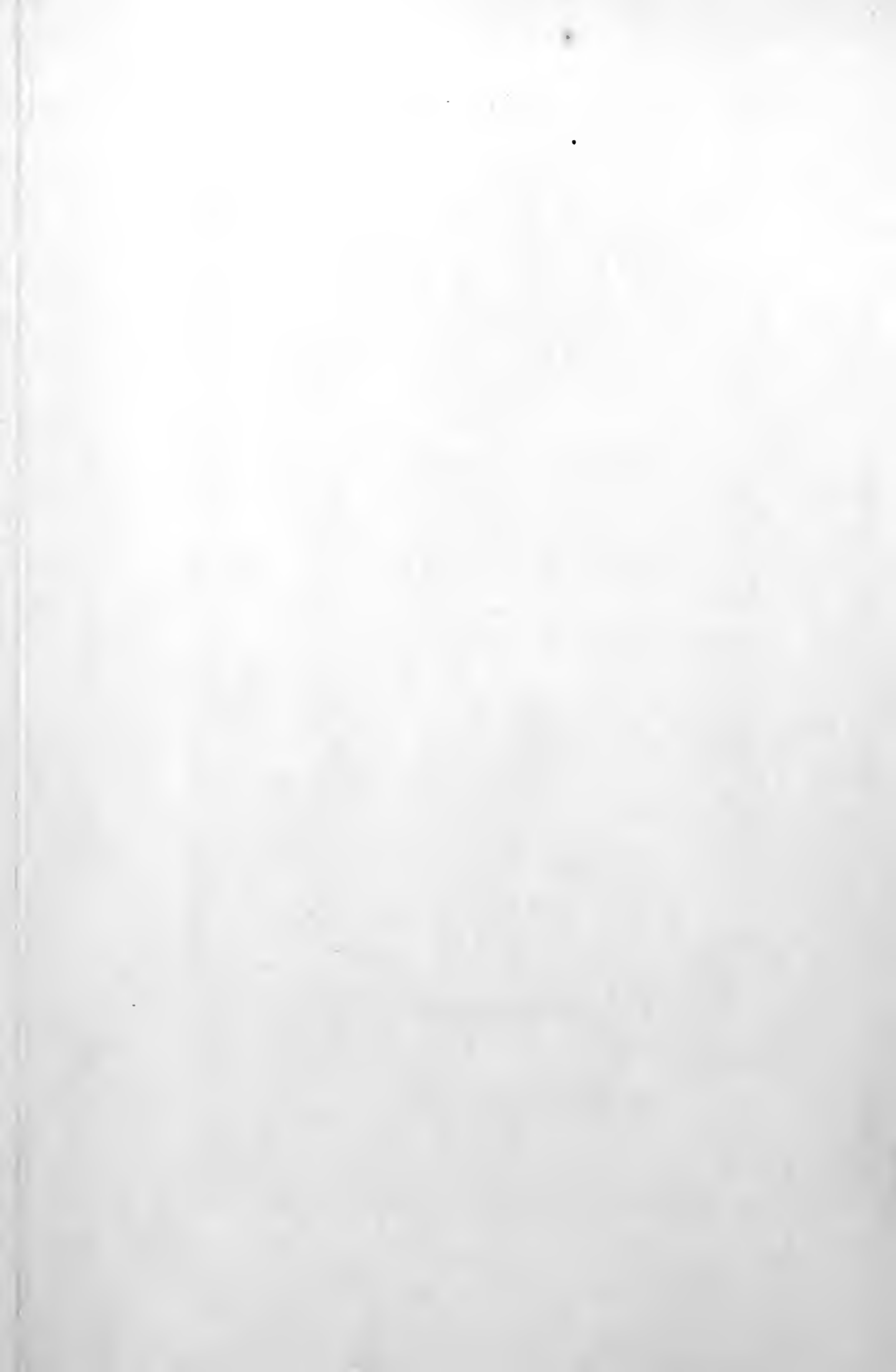
The Writings
of
OSCAR WILDE

Uniform Edition



Illustrated

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(Incorporated)
• 1907 •



UNIFORM EDITION

THE WRITINGS
OF
OSCAR WILDE



Epigrams
PHRASES AND PHILOSOPHIES
FOR THE USE OF THE YOUNG

ILLUSTRATED

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A. R. KELLER & CO., Inc.
1907

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Oscariana.



OSCARIANA.

THE CREDO.

The artist is the creator of beautiful things.

To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.

The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things.

The highest as the lowest form of criticism is a mode of autobiography.

Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.

Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope.

They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty.

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There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all.

The nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass.

The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass.

The moral life of man forms part of the subject-matter of the artist, but the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium.

No artist desires to prove anything. Even things that are true can be proved.

No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style.

No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything.

Thought and language are to the artist instruments of an art.

Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.

From the point of view of form, the type of all the arts is the art of the musician. From the point of view of feeling, the actor's craft is the type.

All art is at once surface and symbol.

Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.

Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.

Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex and vital.

When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself.

We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.

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All art is quite useless.

DECAY OF LYING.

Art never expresses anything but itself. It has an independent life, just as Thought has, and develops purely on its own lines. It is not necessarily realistic in an age of realism, nor spiritual in an age of faith. So far from being the creation of its time, it is usually in direct opposition to it, and the only history that it preserves for us is the history of its own progress.

All bad Art comes from returning to Life and Nature, and elevating them into Ideals. Life and Nature may sometimes be used as part of Art's rough material, but before they are of any real service to Art they must be translated into artistic conventions. The moment Art surrenders its imaginative medium it surrenders everything. As a method Realism is a complete failure, and the two things that every artist should avoid are modernity of form and modernity of subject-matter.

Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life. This results not merely from Life's imitative instinct, but from the fact that the self-con-

scious aim of Life is to find expression, and that Art offers it certain beautiful forms through which it may realise that energy.

Lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of art.

DORIAN GRAY.

The value of an idea has nothing whatever to do with the sincerity of the man who expresses it.

DECAY OF LYING.

The more we study Art, the less we care for Nature. What Art really reveals to us is Nature's lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition. . . . It is fortunate for us, however, that Nature is so imperfect, as otherwise we should have had no art at all. Art is our spirited protest, our gallant attempt to teach Nature her proper place. As for the infinite variety of Nature, that is a pure myth. It is not to be found in Nature herself. It resides in the imagination, or fancy, or cultivated blindness of the man who looks at her.

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THE CRITIC AS ARTIST.

To know the vintage and quality of a wine, one need not drink the whole cask.

To be natural is to be obvious, and to be obvious is to be inartistic.

What is truth? In matters of religion, it is simply the opinion that has survived. In matters of science, it is the ultimate sensation. In matters of art, it is one's last mood.

Nature hates Mind.

DECAY OF LYING.

Thinking is the most unhealthy thing in the world, and people die of it just as they die of any other disease.

The popular cry of our time is, "Let us return to Life and Nature; they will recreate Art for us, and send the red blood coursing through her veins; they will shoe her feet with swiftness, and make her hand strong." But, alas! we are mistaken in our amiable and well-meant efforts. Nature is al-

ways behind the age. And as for Life, she is the solvent that breaks up Art, the enemy that lays waste her house.

Art begins with abstract decoration, with purely imaginative and pleasurable work dealing with what is unreal and non-existent. This is the first stage. Then Life becomes fascinated with this new wonder, and asks to be admitted into the charmed circle. Art takes life as part of her rough material, re-creates it, and re-fashions it in fresh forms; is absolutely indifferent to fact; invents, imagines, dreams, and keeps between herself and reality the impenetrable barrier of beautiful style, of decorative or ideal treatment. The third stage is when Life gets the upper hand, and drives Art out into the wilderness. This is the true decadence, and it is from this that we are now suffering.

Nature is no great mother who has borne us. She is our creation. It is our brain that she quickens to life. Things are because we see them, and what we see, and how we see it, depends on the Arts that have influenced us. To look at a thing is very different from seeing a thing. One does not see anything until one sees its beauty.

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Art creates an incomparable and unique effect, and, having done so, passes on to other things. Nature, upon the other hand, forgetting that imitation can be made the sincerest form of insult, keeps on repeating the effect until we all become absolutely wearied of it.

When Art is more varied, Nature will, no doubt, be more varied also.

Modernity of form and modernity of subject-matter are entirely and absolutely wrong. We have mistaken the common livery of the age for the vesture of the Muses, and spend our days in the sordid streets and hideous suburbs of our vile cities when we should be out on the hillside with Apollo. Certainly we are a degraded race, and have sold our birthright for a mess of facts.

The object of Art is not simple truth, but complex beauty. Art itself is really a form of exaggeration; and selection, which is the very spirit of Art, is nothing more than an intensified mode of over-emphasis.

Art finds her own perfection within, and not outside of, herself. She is not to be judged by any

external standard of resemblance. She is a veil rather than a mirror. She has flowers that no forests know of, birds that no woodland possesses. She makes and unmakes many worlds, and can draw the moon from heaven with a scarlet thread. Hers are the "forms more real than living man," and hers the great archetypes of which things that have existence are but unfinished copies. Nature has, in her eyes, no laws, no uniformity. She can work miracles at her will, and when she calls monsters from the deep they come. She can bid the almond tree blossom in winter, and send the snow upon the ripe cornfield. At her word the frost lays its silver finger on the burning mouth of June, and the winged lions creep out from the hollows of the Lydian hills. The dryads peer from the thicket as she passes by, and the brown fauns smile strangely at her when she comes near them. She has hawk-faced gods that worship her, and the centaurs gallop at her side.

The proper school to learn Art in is not Life but Art.

Life holds the mirror up to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter

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or sculptor, or realises in fact what has been dreamed in fiction.

Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life. . . . The Greeks, with their quick artistic instinct, understood this, and set in the bride's chamber the statue of Hermes or of Apollo, that she might bear children as lovely as the works of art that she looked at in her rapture or her pain. They knew that Life gains from Art not merely spirituality, depth of thought and feeling, soul-turmoil or soul-peace, but that she can form herself on the very lines and colours of art, and can reproduce the dignity of Phidias as well as the grace of Praxiteles. Hence came their objection to realism. They disliked it on purely social grounds. They felt that it inevitably makes people ugly, and they were perfectly right. We try to improve the conditions of the race by means of good air, free sunlight, wholesome water, and hideous bare buildings for the better housing of the lower orders. But these things merely produce health, they do not produce beauty. For this, Art is required, and the true disciples of the great artist are not his studio-imitators, but those who become like his works of art, be they plastic as



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THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

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in Greek days, or pictorial as in modern times. In a word, Life is Art's best, Art's only pupil.

The spirit of an age may be best expressed in the abstract ideal arts, for the spirit itself is abstract and ideal.

Just as those who do not love Plato more than truth cannot pass beyond the threshold of the Academe, so those who do not love Beauty more than Truth never know the inmost shrine of Art.

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST.

The material that painter or sculptor uses is meagre in comparison with that of words. Words have not merely music as sweet as that of viol or lute, colour as rich and vivid as any that makes lovely for us the canvas of the Venetian or the Spaniard, and plastic form no less sure and certain than that which reveals itself in marble or in bronze, but thought and passion, and spirituality are theirs also, are theirs, indeed, alone. If the Greeks had criticised nothing but language, they would still have been the great art-critics of the world. To know the principles of the highest art is to know the principles of all the arts.

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Those who live in marble or on painted panel know of life but a single exquisite instant, eternal indeed in its beauty, but limited to one note of passion or one mood of calm. Those whom the poet makes live have their myriad emotions of joy and terror, of courage and despair, of pleasure and of suffering. The seasons come and go in glad or saddening pageant, and with winged or leaden feet the years pass by before them. They have their youth and their manhood, they are children and they grow old. It is always dawn for St. Helena as Veronese saw her at the window. Through the still morning air the angels bring her the symbol of God's pain. The cool breezes of the morning lift the gilt threads from her brow. On that little hill by the city of Florence, where the lovers of Giorgione are lying, it is always the solstice of noon, of noon made so languorous by summer suns that hardly can the slim, naked girl dip into the marble tank the round bubble of clear glass, and the long fingers of the lute-player rest idly upon the chords. It is twilight always for the dancing nymphs whom Corot set free among the silver poplars of France. In eternal twilight they move, those frail, diaphanous figures, whose tremulous white feet seem not to touch the dew-drenched

grass they tread on. But those who walk in epos, drama, or romance, see through the labouring months the young moons wax and wane, and watch the night from evening unto morning star, and from sunrise unto sunsetting can note the shifting day with all its gold and shadow. For them, as for us, the flowers bloom and wither, and the Earth, that Green-tressed Goddess, as Coleridge calls her, alters her raiment for their pleasure. The statue is concentrated to one moment of perfection. The image stained upon the canvas possesses no spiritual element of growth or change. If they know nothing of death it is because they know little of life, for the secrets of life and death belong to those, and those only, whom the sequence of time affects, and who possess not merely the present but the future, and can rise or fall from a past of glory or of shame. Movement, that problem of the visible arts, can be truly realised by Literature alone. It is Literature that shows us the body in its swiftness and the soul in its unrest.

Criticism is itself an art. . . . It is no more to be judged by any low standard of imitation or resemblance than is the work of poet or sculptor.

The critic occupies the same relation to the work of art that he criticises as the artist does to the visible world of form and colour, or the unseen world of passion and thought. He does not even require for the perfection of his art the finest materials. Anything will serve his purpose.

Just as the great artists, from Homer and Æschylus down to Shakespeare and Keats, did not go directly to life for their subject-matter, but sought for it in myth, and legend, and ancient tale, so the critic deals with materials that others have, as it were, purified for him, and to which imaginative form and colour have been already added. Nay, more, I would say that the highest Criticism, being the purest form of personal impression, is in its way more creative than creation, as it has least reference to any standard external to itself, and is, in fact, its own reason for existing, and, as the Greeks would put it, in itself, and to itself, an end. Certainly it is never trammelled by any shackles of verisimilitude. No ignoble considerations of probability, that cowardly concession to the tedious repetitions of domestic or public life, affect it ever. One may appeal from fiction unto fact; but from the soul there is no appeal. The highest criticism really is the record of one's

own soul. It is more fascinating than history, as it is concerned simply with one's self. It is more delightful than philosophy, as its subject is concrete and not abstract, real and not vague. It is the only civilised form of autobiography, as it deals, not with the events, but with the thoughts of one's life, not with life's physical accidents of deed or circumstance, but with the spiritual moods and imaginative passions of the mind.

Who cares whether Mr. Ruskin's views on Turner are sound or not? What does it matter? That mighty and majestic prose of his, so fervid and so fiery-coloured in its noble eloquence, so rich in its elaborate symphonic music, so sure and certain, at its best, in subtle choice of word and epithet, is at least as great a work of art as any of those wonderful sunsets that bleach or rot on their corrupted canvases in England's Gallery, greater, indeed, one is apt to think at times, not merely because its equal beauty is more enduring, but on account of the fuller variety of its appeal, soul speaking to soul in those long cadenced lines, not through form and colour alone, though through these, indeed, completely and without loss; but with intellectual and emotional utterance, with

lofty passion and with loftier thought, with imaginative insight and with poetic aim, greater, I always think, even as Literature is the greater art.

The meaning of any beautiful created thing is, at least, as much in the soul of him who looks at it, as it was in his soul who wrought it.

Beauty has as many meanings as man has moods. Beauty is the symbol of symbols. Beauty reveals everything, because it expresses nothing. When it shows us itself, it shows us the whole fiery-coloured world.

It is sometimes said that the tragedy of an artist's life is that he cannot realise his ideal. But the true tragedy that dogs the steps of most artists is that they realise their ideal too absolutely. For when the ideal is realised it is robbed of its wonder and its mystery, and becomes simply a new starting point for an ideal that is other than itself.

Some resemblance the creative work of the critic will have to the work that has stirred him to creation, but it will be such resemblance as exists, not

between Nature and the mirror that the painter of landscape or figure may be supposed to hold up to her, but between Nature and the work of the decorative artist. Just as on the flowerless carpets of Persia, tulip and rose blossom indeed, and are lovely to look on, though they are not reproduced in visible shape or line; just as the pearl and purple of the sea-shell is echoed in the church of St. Mark at Venice; just as the vaulted ceiling of the wondrous chapel at Ravenna is made gorgeous by the gold and green and sapphire of the peacock's tail, though the birds of Juno fly not across it; so the critic reproduces the work that he criticises in a mode that is never imitative, and part of whose charm may really consist in the rejection of resemblance, and shows us in this way not merely the meaning but also the mystery of Beauty, and by transforming each art into literature, solves once for all the problem of Art's unity.

Just as it is only by contact with the art of foreign nations that the art of a country gains that individual and separate life that we call nationality, so by curious inversion it is only by intensifying his own personality that the critic can in-

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terpret the personality of others, and the more strongly this personality enters into the interpretation the more real the interpretation becomes, the more satisfying, the more convincing, and the more true.

It is through Art, and through Art only, that we can realise our perfection; through Art, and through Art only, that we can shield ourselves from the sordid perils of actual existence.

All Art is immoral.

Emotion for the sake of emotion is the aim of Art, and emotion for the sake of action is the aim of life, and of that practical organisation of life that we call society.

To the æsthetic temperament the vague is always repellent. The Greeks were a nation of artists, because they were spared the sense of the infinite.

Out of ourselves we can never pass, nor can there be in creation what in the creator was not.

There are two ways of disliking Art. One is to dislike it; the other, to like it rationally.

There is nothing sane about the worship of beauty. It is too splendid to be sane. Those of whose lives it forms the dominant note will always seem to the world to be pure visionaries.

In every sphere of life Form is the beginning of things. The rhythmic, harmonious gestures of dancing convey, Plato tells us, both rhythm and harmony into the mind. Forms are the food of faith, cried Newman, in one of those great moments of sincerity that make us admire and know the man. He was right, though he may not have known how terribly right he was. The Creeds are believed, not because they are rational, but because they are repeated. Yes, Form is everything. It is the secret of Life. Find expression for a sorrow and it will become dear to you. Find expression for a joy and you intensify its ecstasy. Do you wish to love? Use Love's Litany, and the words will create the yearning from which the world fancies that they spring. Have you a grief that corrodes your heart? Steep yourself in the language of grief, learn its utterance from Prince Hamlet and Queen Constance, and you will find that mere expression is a mode of consolation, and that Form, which is the birth of Passion, is also

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the death of Pain. And so, to return to the sphere of Art, it is Form that creates, not merely the critical temperament, but also the æsthetic instinct that reveals to one all things under the condition of beauty. Start with the worship of form, and there is no secret in Art that will not be revealed to you.

Technique is really personality. That is the reason why the artist cannot teach it, why the pupil cannot learn it, and why the æsthetic critic can understand it.

The form of government that is most suitable to the artist is no government at all.

There are three kinds of despots. There is the despot who tyrannises over the body. There is the despot who tyrannises over the soul. There is the despot who tyrannises over soul and body alike. The first is called the Prince. The second is called the Pope. The third is called the People.

Art should never try to be popular. The public should try to make itself artistic.

In England the arts that have escaped best are the arts in which the public take no interest.

Art is Individualism, and Individualism is a disturbing and disintegrating force.

The fact is, the public make use of the classics of a country as a means of checking the progress of Art. They degrade the classics into authorities. They use them as bludgeons for preventing the free expression of Beauty in new forms.

In France they limit the journalist, and allow the artist almost perfect freedom. Here we allow absolute freedom to the journalist and entirely limit the artist.

The work of Art is to dominate the spectator; the spectator is not to dominate the work of Art.

The work of Art is beautiful by being what Art has never been; and to measure it by the standard of the past is to measure it by a standard on the rejection of which its real perfection depends.

A true artist takes no notice whatever of the public. The public are to him non-existent.

Better to take pleasure in a rose than to put its root under a microscope.

In art there is no such thing as a universal truth. A Truth in art is that whose contradictory is also true.

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The truths of metaphysics are the truths of masks.

Science is out of the reach of morals, for her eyes are fixed upon eternal truths. Art is out of the reach of morals, for her eyes are fixed upon things beautiful and immortal and ever-changing.

Art is the only serious thing in the world, and the artist is the only person who is never serious.

The Past is of no importance. The Present is of no importance. It is with the Future that we have to deal. For the past is what man should not have been. The present is what man ought not to be. The future is what artists are.

DORIAN GRAY.

Art has no influence upon action. It is superbly sterile. The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame. That is all.

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST.

To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.

Anything approaching to the free play of the mind is practically unknown amongst us. People cry out against the sinner, yet it is not the sinful, but the stupid, who are our shame. There is no sin except stupidity.

We teach people how to remember, we never teach them how to grow.

What is mind but motion in the intellectual sphere? The essence of thought, as the essence of life, is growth. What people call insincerity is simply a method by which we can multiply our personalities.

The man who regards his past is a man who deserves to have no future to look forward to.

What is termed Sin is an essential element of Progress. Without it the world would stagnate or grow old, or become colourless. By its curiosity Sin increases the experience of the race. Through its intensified assertion of individualism it saves us from monotony of type. In its rejection of the current notions about morality it is one with the higher ethics.

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If you wish to understand others you must intensify your own individualism.

THE SOUL OF MAN UNDER SOCIALISM.

The majority of men spoil their lives by an exaggerated and unhealthy altruism.

It is immoral to use private property in order to alleviate the horrible evils that result from the institution of private property.

Socialism itself will be of value because it will lead to individualism.

Disobedience in the eyes of any one who has read history is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion.

The true perfection of man lies, not in what man has, but in what man is.

Nothing should be able to harm a man except himself. Nothing should be able to rob a man at all. What a man really has is what is in him. What is outside of him should be a matter of no importance.

Jealousy, which is an extraordinary source of crime in modern life, is an emotion closely bound up with our conception of property, and under Socialism and Individualism will die out. It is remarkable that in communistic tribes jealousy is entirely unknown.

Individualism does not come to man with any claims upon him at all. It comes naturally and inevitably out of man. It is the point to which all development tends. It is the differentiation to which all organisms grow. It is the perfection that is inherent in every mode of life, and towards which every mode of life quickens. Individualism exercises no compulsion over man. On the contrary, it says to man that he should suffer no compulsion to be exercised over him. It does not try to force people to be good. It knows that people are good when they are let alone. Man will develop Individualism out of himself. Man is now so developing Individualism. To ask whether Individualism is practical is like asking whether Evolution is practical. Evolution is the law of life, and there is no evolution except towards Individualism.

It will be a marvellous thing, the true person-

ality of man, when we see it. It will grow naturally and simply—flower-like, or as a tree grows. It will not be at discord. It will never argue or dispute. It will not prove things. It will know everything. And yet it will not busy itself about knowledge. It will have wisdom. Its value will not be measured by material things. It will have nothing. And yet it will have everything, and whatever one takes from it, it will still have, so rich will it be. It will not be always meddling with others, or asking them to be like itself. It will love them because they will be different. And yet while it will not meddle with others it will help all, as a beautiful thing helps us, by being what it is. The personality of man will be very wonderful. It will be as wonderful as the personality of a child.

“Know thyself” was written over the portico of the antique world. Over the portal of the new world “Be thyself” shall be written. And the message of Christ to man was simply “Be thyself.” That is the secret of Jesus.

When Jesus talks about the poor, He simply means personalities, just as when He talks about the rich He simply means people who have not developed their personalities.

Jesus said to man: You have a wonderful personality. Develop it. Be yourself. Don't imagine that your perfection lies in accumulating or possessing external things. Your perfection is inside of you. If only you could realise that, you would not want to be rich. Ordinary riches can be stolen from a man; real riches cannot. In the treasury-house of your soul there are infinitely precious things that may not be taken from you. Try to so shape your life that external things will not harm you; and try, also, to get rid of personal property. It involves sordid preoccupation, endless industry, continual wrong. Personal property hinders Individualism at every step.

There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor. The poor can think of nothing else. That is the misery of being poor.

Man is complete in himself.

He who would lead a Christ-like life is he who is perfectly and absolutely himself. He may be a great poet, or a great man of science, or a young student at the University, or one who watches sheep upon a moor, or a maker of dramas like Shakespeare, or a thinker about God, like Spinoza,

or a child who plays in a garden, or a fisherman who throws his nets into the sea. It does not matter what he is as long as he realises the perfection of the soul that is within him.

All imitation in morals and in life is wrong.

There is no one type for man. There are as many perfections as there are imperfect men. And while to the claims of charity a man may yield and yet be free, to the claims of conformity no man may yield and remain free at all.

A Community is infinitely more brutalised by the habitual employment of punishment than it is by the occasional occurrence of crime.

The State is to make what is useful. The individual is to make what is beautiful.

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.

A practical scheme is either a scheme that is already in existence, or a scheme that could be carried out under existing conditions.

Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live. And unselfishness is letting other peoples' lives alone, not interfering with them.

All sympathy is fine, but sympathy with suffering is the least fine mode.

It is through joy that the Individualism of the future will develop itself. Christ made no attempt to reconstruct society, and consequently the Individualism that He preached to man could be realised only through pain or in solitude.

What man has sought for is neither pain nor pleasure, but simply Life. Man has sought to live intensely, fully, perfectly. When he can do so without exercising restraint on others, or suffering it ever, and his activities are all pleasurable to him, he will be saner, healthier, more civilised, more himself. Pleasure is Nature's test, her sign of approval. When man is happy he is at harmony with himself and his environment.

The new Individualism is the new Hellenism.

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST.

Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is always Judas who writes the biography.

Even in actual life, egotism is not without its attractions. When people talk to us about others they are usually dull. When they talk to us about themselves they are nearly always interesting, and if one could shut them up when they become wearisome, as easily as one can shut up a book of which one has grown wearied, they would be perfect absolutely.

Formerly we used to canonise our heroes. The modern method is to vulgarise them. Cheap editions of great books may be delightful, but cheap editions of great men are absolutely detestable.

It is very much more difficult to write about a thing than to do it. Anybody can *make* history. Only a great man can *write* it.

What are the Virtues? Nature, M. Renan tells us, cares little about chastity, and it may be that it is to the shame of the Magdalen, and not to their own purity, that the Lucretias of modern life

owe their freedom from stain. Charity, as even those of whose religion it makes a formal part have been compelled to acknowledge, creates a multitude of evils. The mere existence of conscience, that faculty of which people prate so much nowadays, and are so ignorantly proud, is a sign of our imperfect development. It must be merged in instinct before we become fine. Self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice a survival of the mutilation of the savage, part of that old worship of pain which is so terrible a factor in the history of the world, and which even now makes its victims day by day, and has its altars in the land. Virtues! Who knows what the virtues are? Not you. Not I. Not any one. It is well for our vanity that we slay the criminal, for if we suffered him to live he might show us what he had gained by his crime. It is well for his peace that the saint goes to his martyrdom. He is spared the sight of the horror of his harvest.

Those who try to lead the people can only do so by following the mob. It is through the voice of one crying in the wilderness that the ways of the gods must be prepared.

32 THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

It is so easy to convert others. It is so difficult to convert one's self.

An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.

England will never be civilised until she has added Utopia to her dominions. There is more than one of her colonies that she might with advantage surrender for so fair a land.

He to whom the present is the only thing that is present, knows nothing of the age in which he lives. To realise the nineteenth century, one must realise every century that has preceded it, and that has contributed to its making.

To know anything about one's self, one must know all about others.

While in the opinion of Society, contemplation is the gravest sin of which any man can be guilty, in the opinion of the highest culture it is the proper occupation of man. . . . To do nothing at all is the most difficult thing in the world, the

most difficult and the most intellectual. To Plato, with his passion for wisdom, this was the noblest form of energy. To Aristotle, with his passion for knowledge, this was the noblest form of energy also. It was to this that the passion for holiness led the saint and the mystic of mediæval days.

Life is terribly deficient in form. Its catastrophes happen in the wrong way and to the wrong people. There is a grotesque horror about its comedies, and its tragedies seem to culminate in farce. One is always wounded when one approaches it. Things last either too long, or not long enough.

DORIAN GRAY.

There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.

Beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid.

The one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties. I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing. When we meet—we do meet occasionally, when we dine out together or go down to the Duke's—we tell each other the most absurd stories with the most serious faces. My wife is very good at it, better, in fact, than I am. She never gets confused over her dates, and I always do. But when she does find me out, she makes no row at all. I sometimes wish she would; but she merely laughs at me.

The way of paradoxes is the way of truth. To test Reality we must see it on the tight rope. When the Verities become acrobats we can judge them.

With an evening coat and a white tie, anybody, even a stockbroker, can gain a reputation for being civilised.

Conscience and cowardice are really the same thing. Conscience is the trade name of the firm; that is all.

Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is far the best ending for one.

I choose my friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their good intellects.

I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world.

An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty.

It is a sad thing to think of, but there is no doubt that Genius lasts longer than Beauty.

The thoroughly well-informed man is the modern ideal. And the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man is a dreadful thing. It is like a bric-à-brac shop, all monsters and dust, with everything priced above its proper value.

What a fuss people make about fidelity! Why, even in love it is purely a question for physiology. It has nothing to do with our own will. Young

men want to be faithful, and are not; old men want to be faithless, and cannot; that is all one can say.

There is no such thing as a good influence. All influence is immoral—immoral from the scientific point of view.

To influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of some one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him. The aim of life is self-development. To realise one's nature perfectly—that is what each of us is here for.

The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself.

Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul.

Beauty is a form of genius—is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation. It is of

the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or springtime, or the reflection in dark water of that silver shell we call the moon.

People say sometimes that Beauty is only superficial. That may be so, but at least it is not so superficial as Thought is.

To me, Beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.

The only difference between a caprice and a life-long passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer.

The costume of the Nineteenth Century is detestable. Sin is the only real colour-element left in modern life.

Women have no appreciation of good looks in men; at least good women have none.

Credit is the capital of a younger son, and he can live charmingly on it.

38 THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

Examinations are pure humbug from beginning to end. If a man is a gentleman, he knows quite enough; and if he is not a gentleman, whatever he knows is bad for him.

Behind every exquisite thing that exists there is something tragic. Worlds have to be in travail that the meanest flower may blow.

I can stand brute force, but brute reason is quite unbearable. There is something unfair about its use. It is hitting below the intellect.

Humanity takes itself too seriously. It is the world's original sin. If the cavemen had known how to laugh, History would have been different.

Punctuality is the thief of time.

Lady Henry Wotton was a curious woman, whose dresses always looked as if they had been designed in a rage, and put on in a tempest. She was usually in love with somebody, and as her passion was never returned, she had kept all her illusions. She tried to look picturesque, but only succeeded in be-

ing untidy. Her name was Victoria, and she had a perfect mania for going to church.

To get back one's youth, one has merely to repeat one's follies.

Nowadays most people die of a sort of creeping common-sense, and discover, when it is too late, that the only thing one never regrets are one's mistakes.

I never talk during music; at least during good music. If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it in conversation.

Never marry a woman with straw-coloured hair. They are so sentimental.

No woman is a genius. Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly.

Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals.

The people who love only once in their lives are really the shallow people. What they call their loyalty, and their fidelity, I call either the lethargy of custom or their lack of imagination. Faithfulness is to the emotional life what consistency is to the life of the intellect—simply a confession of failure.

The longer I live the more keenly I feel that whatever was good enough for our fathers is not good enough for us. In art, as in politics, *les grandpères ont toujours tort*.

Ordinary women never appeal to one's imagination. They are limited to their century. One knows their minds as easily as one knows their bonnets. One can always find them. There is no mystery in any of them. They ride in the Park in the morning, and chatter at tea parties in the afternoon. They have their stereotyped smile and their fashionable manner.

When one is in love, one always begins by deceiving one's self, and always ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls a romance.

Most people become bankrupt through having invested too heavily in the prose of life. To have ruined one's self over poetry is an honour.

There is always something infinitely mean about other people's tragedies.

It is personalities, not principles, that move the age.

Dorian Gray: I don't want to see him. He gives me good advice.

Lady Henry Wotton: People are very fond of giving away what they most need themselves. It is what I call the depth of generosity.

The only artists I have ever known, who are personally delightful, are bad artists. Good artists exist simply in what they make, and consequently are perfectly uninteresting in what they are. A great poet, a really great poet, is the most unpoetical of all creatures. But inferior poets are absolutely fascinating. The worse their rhymes are, the more picturesque they look. The mere fact of having published a book of second-rate sonnets makes a man quite irresistible. He lives the poetry

that he cannot write. The others write the poetry that they dare not realise.

Human life is the one thing worth investigating. Compared to it, there is nothing else of any value. It is true that as one watches life in its curious crucible of pain and pleasure, one cannot wear over one's face a mask of glass, nor keep the sulphurous fumes from troubling the brain and making the imagination turbid with monstrous fancies and misshapen dreams. There are poisons so subtle that to know their properties one has to sicken of them. There are maladies so strange that one has to pass through them if one seeks to understand their nature. And yet, what a great reward one receives! How wonderful the whole world becomes to one! To note the curious hard logic of passion, and the emotional coloured life of the intellect—to observe where they meet, and where they separate, at what point they are in unison, and at what point they are at discord—there is a delight in that! What matter what the cost is! One can never pay too high a price for any sensation.

Soul and body, body and soul—how mysterious they are! There is animalism in the soul, and the

body has its moments of spirituality. The senses can refine, and the intellect can degrade. Who can say where the fleshly impulse ceases, or the psychical impulse begins? How shallow are the arbitrary definitions of ordinary psychologists! And yet how difficult to decide between the claims of the various schools! Is the soul a shadow seated in the house of sin? Or is the body really in the soul, as Giordano Bruno thought? The separation of spirit from matter is a mystery, and the unison of spirit with matter is a mystery also.

Ordinary people wait till life discloses to them its secrets, but to the few, the elect, the mysteries of life are revealed before the veil is drawn away. Sometimes this is the effect of art, and chiefly of the art of literature, which deals immediately with the passions and the intellect. But now and then a complex personality takes the place and assumes the office of art, is indeed, in its way, a real work of art, Life having its elaborate masterpieces, just as poetry has, or sculpture, or painting.

Experience is of no ethical value. It is merely the name men give to their mistakes. Moralists

have, as a rule, regarded it as a mode of warning, have claimed for it a certain ethical efficacy in the formation of character, have praised it as something that teaches us what to follow and shows us what to avoid. But there is no motive power in experience. It is as little of an active cause as conscience itself. All that it really demonstrates is that our future will be the same as our past, and that the sin we have done once, and with loathing, we shall do many times and with joy.

It is the very passions about whose origin we deceive ourselves that tyrannise most strongly over us. Our weakest motives are those of whose nature we are conscious. It often happens that when we think we are experimenting on others we are really experimenting on ourselves.

Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing, it is always from the noblest motives.

I never take any notice of what common people say, and I never interfere with what charming people do.

You know that I am not a champion of marriage. The real drawback to marriage is that it makes one unselfish. And unselfish people are col-

ourless. They lack individuality. Still, there are certain temperaments that marriage makes more complex. They retain their egotism, and add to it many other egos. They are forced to have more than one life. They become more highly organised; and to be highly organised is, I should fancy, the object of man's existence. Besides, every experience is of value, and, whatever one may say against marriage, it is certainly an experience.

The reason we all like to think so well of others is that we are all afraid for ourselves. The basis of optimism is sheer terror. We think that we are generous because we credit our neighbours with the possession of those virtues that are likely to be a benefit to us. We praise the banker that we may overdraw our account; and find good qualities in the highwayman in the hope that he may spare our pockets. I have the greatest contempt for optimism. As for a spoiled life, no life is spoiled but one whose growth is arrested. If you want to mar a nature, you have merely to reform it.

Pleasure is Nature's test, her sign of approval. When we are happy we are always good; but when we are good, we are not always happy.

To be good is to be in harmony with one's self. Discord is to be forced to be in harmony with others. One's own life, that is the important thing. As for the lives of one's neighbours—if one wishes to be a prig or a Puritan—one can flaunt one's moral views about them, but they are not one's concern. Besides, Individualism has really the higher aim. Modern morality consists in accepting the standard of one's age. I consider that for any man of culture to accept the standard of his age, is a form of the grossest immorality.

I should fancy that the real tragedy of the poor is that they can afford nothing but self-denial. Beautiful sins, like beautiful things, are the privilege of the rich.

Mediaeval art is charming, but mediæval emotions are out of date. One can use them in fiction, of course; but then the only things one can use in fiction are the things that one has ceased to use in fact.

No civilised man ever regrets a pleasure, and no uncivilised man ever knows what a pleasure is.

Being adored is a nuisance. Women treat us just as Humanity treats its gods. They worship us, and are always bothering us to do something for them.

Derian Gray: You must admit, Harry, that women give to men the very gold of their lives.

Lord Henry Wotton: Possibly, but they invariably want it back in such very small change.

A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and it leaves one unsatisfied.

There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating—people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing.

The secret of remaining young is never to have an emotion that is unbecoming.

The only way a woman can ever reform a man is by boring him so completely that he loses all possible interest in life.

Conscience makes egotists of us all.

Good resolutions are useless attempts to interfere with scientific laws. Their origin is pure vanity. Their result is absolutely nil. They give us now and then some of those luxurious sterile emotions that have a certain charm for the weak. That is all that can be said for them. They are simply cheques that men draw on a bank where they have no accounts.

The people who have adored me have always insisted on living on long after I had ceased to care for them, or they to care for me. They have become stout and tedious, and when I meet them they go in at once for reminiscences. That awful memory of woman! What a fearful thing it is! And what an utter intellectual stagnation it reveals! One should absorb the colour of life, but one should never remember its details. Details are always vulgar.

The one charm of the past is that it is the past. But women never know when the curtain has fallen; they always want a sixth act, and, as soon as the interest of the play is entirely over, they propose to continue it. If they were allowed their own way, every comedy would have a tragic end-

ing, and every tragedy would culminate in a farce. They are charmingly artificial, but they have no sense of art.

Never trust a woman who wears mauve, whatever her age may be, or a woman over thirty-five who is fond of pink ribbons. It always means that they have a history.

I am afraid that women appreciate cruelty, more than anything else. They have wonderfully primitive instincts. We have emancipated them, but they remain slaves, looking for their masters all the same. They love being dominated.

We live in an age that reads too much to be wise, and that thinks too much to be beautiful.

If one doesn't talk about a thing it has never happened. It is simply expression that gives reality to things.

It is only shallow people who require years to get rid of an emotion. A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure.

50 THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

It is a mistake to think that the passion one feels in creation is ever really shown in the work one creates. Art is always more abstract than we fancy. Form and colour tell us of form and colour, that is all.

The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organised forms of existence. But it is probable the true nature of the senses has never been understood, and that they have remained savage and animal merely because the world has sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty will be the dominant characteristic. As we look back upon man moving through History, we are haunted by a feeling of loss. So much has been surrendered! and to such little purpose! There have been mad, wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin is fear, and whose result is a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from

which, in their ignorance, they have sought to escape! Nature, in her wonderful irony driving out the anchorite to feed with the wild animals of the desert and giving to the hermit the beasts of the field as his companions.

Yes, there must be a new Hedonism shall recreate life, and save it from that harsh, uncomely Puritanism, that is having, in our own day, its curious revival. It must have its service of the intellect, certainly; yet it must never accept any theory or system that will involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience. Its aim, indeed, is to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, bitter or sweet as they may be. Of the æstheticism that deadens the senses, as of the vulgar profligacy that dulls them, it is to know nothing. But it is to teach man to concentrate himself upon the moments of a life that is in itself a moment.

Society, civilised society at least, is never very ready to believe anything to the detriment of those who are both rich and fascinating. It instinctively feels that manners are of more importance than morals, and in its opinion the highest respect-

ability is of much less value than the possession of a good *chef*. And after all, it is a very poor consolation to be told that the man who has given one a bad dinner, or poor wine, is irreproachable in his private life. Even the cardinal virtues cannot atone for half-cold entrées. For the canons of good society are, or should be, the same as the canons of art. Form is absolutely essential to it. It should have the dignity of a ceremony as well as its unreality, and should combine the insincere character of a romantic play with the wit and beauty that make such plays delightful to us. Is insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities.

Man is a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bears within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh is tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead.

I love scandals about other people, but scandals about oneself don't interest me. They have not got the charm of novelty.

Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed. People talk sometimes of secret vices; there are no such things as secret vices. If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands, even.

There are sins whose fascination is more in the memory than in the doing of them, strange triumphs that gratify the pride more than the passions, and give to the intellect a quickened sense of joy, greater than they bring or can ever bring to the senses.

What nonsense people talk about happy marriages! A man can be happy with any woman so long as he does not love her.

It is a sad truth, but we have lost the faculty of giving lovely names to things. Names are everything. I never quarrel with actions. My one quarrel is with words. That is the reason I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who would call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing he is fit for.

54 THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

It is better to be beautiful than to be good, but it is better to be good than to be ugly.

Each time that one loves is the only time that one has ever loved. Difference of object does not alter singleness of passion; it merely intensifies it.

Romance lives by repetition, and repetition converts an appetite into an art.

We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible.

The only horrible thing in the world is ennui. That is the one sin for which there is no forgiveness.

There is no such thing as an omen. Destiny does not send us heralds. She is too wise or too cruel for that.

How fond women are of doing dangerous things! It is one of the qualities in them that I admire most. A woman will flirt with anybody in the world as long as other people are looking on.

The basis of every scandal is an immoral certainty.

Anybody can be good in the country; there are no temptations there. That is the reason why people who live out of town are so absolutely uncivilised. Civilisation is not by any means an easy thing to attain to. There are only two ways by which man can reach it. One is by being cultured, the other by being corrupt. Country people have no opportunity of being either, so they stagnate.

If a man treats life artistically, his brain is his heart.

Youth! There is nothing like it. It is absurd to talk of the ignorance of youth. The only people to whose opinions I listen now with any respect are persons much younger than myself. They seem in front of me. Life has revealed to them her latest wonder. As for the aged, I always contradict the aged; I do it on principle.

The tragedy of old age is, not that one is old, but that one is young.

56 THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST.

The public is wonderfully tolerant; it forgives everything except genius.

There is only one thing worse than Injustice, and that is Justice without her sword in her hand.

There is much to be said in favour of modern journalism. By giving us the opinions of the uneducated, it keeps us in touch with the ignorance of the community.

What is the difference between literature and journalism? Journalism is unreadable, and literature is unread.

SOUL OF MAN.

Some years ago people went about the country saying that property has duties. It is perfectly true. Property not merely has duties, but has so many duties that its possession to any large extent is a bore. If property had simply pleasures, we could stand it; but its duties make it unbearable.

Charity creates a multitude of sins.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN.

There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pits and precipices.

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST.

Society often forgives the criminal; it never forgives the dreamer.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN.

If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously; if you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance.

Lady Windermere: Why do you talk so trivially about life?

Lord Darlington: Because I think that life is

far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it.

Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones.

One can resist everything except temptation.

Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out.

Misfortunes one can endure—they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—ah! there is the sting of life.

My experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all.

It is most dangerous nowadays for a husband to pay any attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think that he beats her when they are alone. The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life.

London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognise them. They look so thoroughly unhappy.

I think he's sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory and talks like a Radical, and that is so important nowadays.

Hopper is one of nature's gentlemen; the worst type of gentleman I know.

Nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

Wicked women bother one; good women bore one. That is the only difference between them.

What is the difference between scandal and gossip? Oh, gossip is charming. History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality.

A man who moralises is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralises is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Nonconformist conscience. And most women know it, I am glad to say.

How marriage ruins a man! It is as demoralising as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

Don't be led astray into the paths of virtue—that is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if we are good, when they meet us they don't love us at all. They like to find us irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite hopelessly good.

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.

There's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

Lord Darlington: She is a good woman. She is the only good woman I have ever met in my life.

Cecil Graham: The only good woman you have ever met in your life? Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women! I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.

In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is get-

ting it. The last is much the worst, the last is the real tragedy.

What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing. And a sentimentalist is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

What a pity that in life we only get our lessons when they are of no use to us!

Actions are the first tragedy in life, words are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless.

London is too full of fogs and serious people. Whether the fogs produce the serious people, or whether the serious people produce the fogs, I don't know.

A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE.

Lady Stutfield is really very sympathetic; she is just as sympathetic about one thing as she is about another. She has a beautiful nature.

I am sure that if I lived in the country for six months I should become so unsophisticated that no one would take the least notice of me.

To elope is cowardly; it is running away from danger, and danger has become so rare in modern life.

Nothing spoils a romance so much as a sense of humour in the woman, or the want of it in a man.

The one advantage of playing with fire is that one never gets even singed. It is the people who don't know how to play with it who get burned up.

Lady Stutfield: The world was made for men, and not for women.

Mrs. Allonby: Oh, don't say that, Lady Stutfield. We have a much better time than they have. There are far more things forbidden to us than are forbidden to them.

Lady Stutfield: I am not surprised the world says you are very, very wicked, Lord Illingworth.



"The one advantage of playing with fire."

THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

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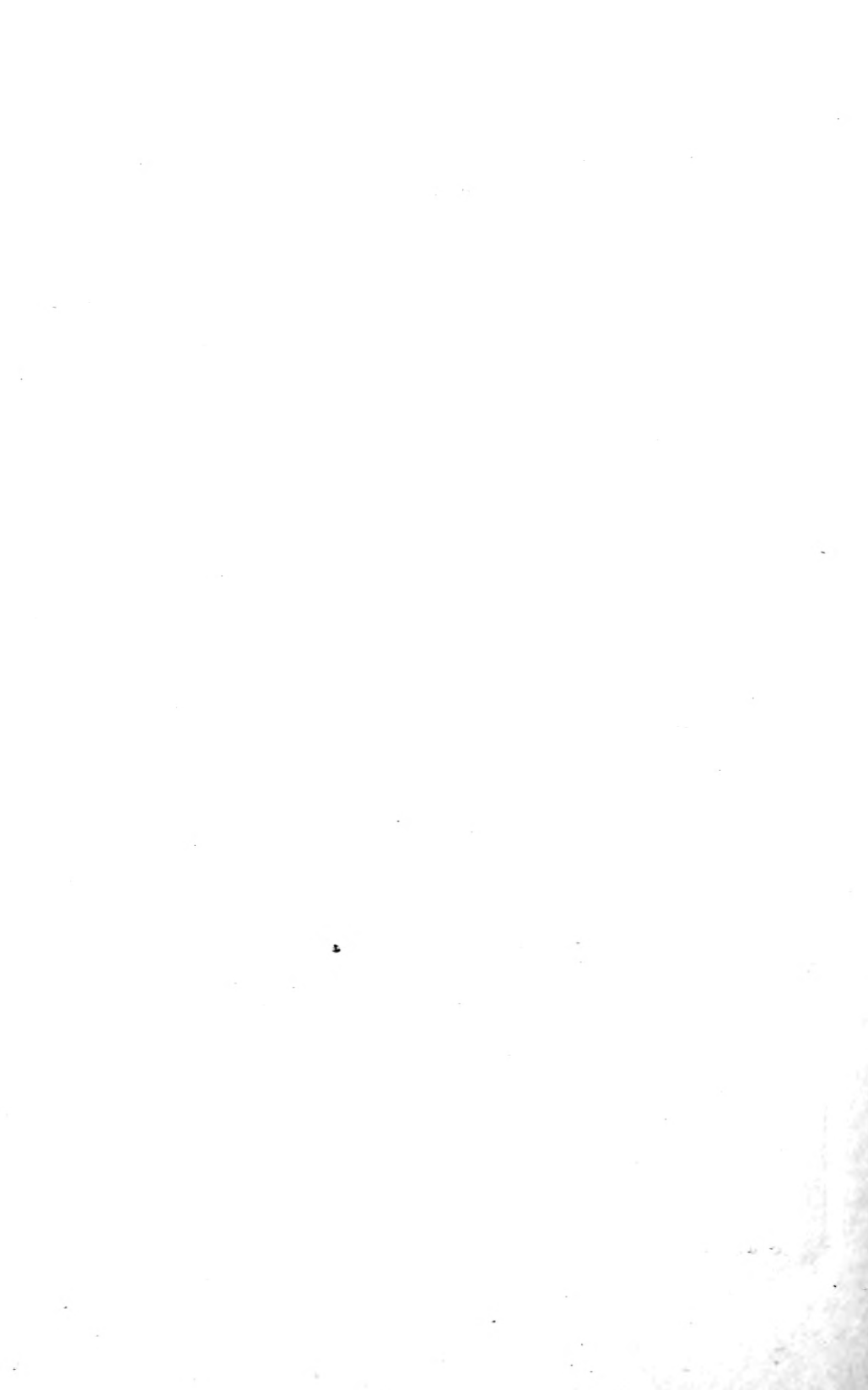
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Lord Illingworth: But what world says that, Lady Stutfield? It must be the next world. This world and I are on excellent terms.

“What are American dry goods?”

“American novels.”

Lady Hunstanton: All Americans dress well. They get their clothes in Paris.

Mrs. Allonby: They say, Lady Hunstanton, that when good Americans die, they go to Paris.

Lady Hunstanton: Indeed, and when bad Americans die, where do they go to, Mrs. Allonby?

Lord Illingworth: Oh! They go to America, Lady Hunstanton.

One should never take sides in anything. Taking sides is the beginning of sincerity, and earnestness follows shortly afterwards, and the human being becomes a bore.

A Radical is merely a man who has never dined, and a Tory simply a gentleman who has never thought.

Vulgar habit, that is, people have nowadays of asking one, after one has given them an idea,

whether one is serious or not. Nothing is serious except passion. The intellect is not a serious thing, and never has been. It is an instrument on which one plays, that is all. The only serious form of intellect I know is the British intellect, and on the British intellect the illiterate always play the drum.

Nowadays it is only the unreadable that occurs.

In a temple every one should be serious except the thing that is being worshipped.

Plain women are always jealous of their husbands, beautiful women never are. They never have time, they are so occupied in being jealous of other people's husbands.

Twenty years of romance make a woman look like a ruin; but twenty years of marriage make her look like a public building.

I adore London dinner-parties. The clever people never listen, and the stupid people never talk.

One should never trust a woman who tells one her real age. A woman who would tell one that would tell one anything.

Lord Illingworth: What is a bad man?

Mrs. Allonby: The sort of man who admires innocence.

Lord Illingworth: And a bad woman?

Mrs. Allonby: Oh! the sort of woman a man never gets tired of.

Mrs. Allonby: Define women as a sex.

Lord Illingworth: Sphinxes without secrets.

I don't believe in the existence of Puritan women. I don't think there is a woman in the world who would not be a little flattered if one made love to her. It is this that makes women so irresistibly adorable.

The soul is born old, but grows young. That is the comedy of life. The body is born young and grows old. That is life's tragedy.

One can survive everything nowadays except death, and live down everything except a good reputation.

I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex.

The Book of Life begins with a man and a woman in a garden. It ends with Revelations.

All men are married women's property. That is the only true definition of what married women's property really is.

Nowadays all the married men live like bachelors, and all the bachelors like married men.

One can always know at once whether a man has home-claims upon his life or not. I have noticed a very sad expression in the eyes of so many married men.

Married men are horribly tedious when they are good husbands, and abominably conceited when they are not.

Life is simply a *mauvais quart d'heure* made up of exquisite moments.

Nothing is so aggravating as calmness. There is something positively brutal about the good temper of most modern men. I wonder we women stand it as well as we do.

Men always want to be a woman's first love. That is their clumsy vanity. Women have a more subtle instinct about things. What they like is to be a man's last romance.

More marriages are ruined nowadays by the common sense of the husband than by anything else. How can a woman be expected to be happy with a man who insists on treating her as if she were a perfectly rational being?

Man, poor, awkward, reliable, necessary man, belongs to a sex that has been rational for millions and millions of years. He can't help himself. It is in his race. The history of women is very different. They have always been picturesque protests against the mere existence of common sense; they saw its dangers from the first.

Duty is what one expects from others; it is not what one does one's self.

Intellectual generalities are always interesting. Generalities in morals mean absolutely nothing.

Discontent is the starting-point in every man's career.

There is nothing like youth. The middle-aged are mortgaged to Life. The old are in Life's lumber room. But youth is the Lord of Life. Youth has a kingdom waiting for it. Every one is born a king, and most people die in exile, like most kings.

Good women have such limited views of life, their horizon is so small, their interests are so petty. The fact is they are not modern, and to be modern is the only thing worth being.

A man who can dominate a London dinner table can rule the world. The future belongs to the dandy. It is the exquisites who are going to rule.

Women are so absolutely superficial that they don't understand the philosophy of the superficial. They can't realise that in the mere knotting of

a necktie there is a whole creed of life. Sentiment is all very well for the buttonhole. But the essential thing for a necktie is style. A well tied tie is the first step in life. In point of fact, women like men to be badly dressed. They are always a little afraid of the dandy. They want appearances to be against men, which they usually are.

Talk to every woman as if you loved her, and to every man as if he bored you, and at the end of your first season you will have the reputation of having the most perfect social tact.

To get into the best society nowadays, one has either to feed people, amuse people, or shock people. To be in it is merely a bore, to be out of it simply a tragedy. Society is a necessary thing. No man has any real success in this world unless he has got women to back him, and women rule society. If you have not got women on your side, you are quite over. You might just as well be a lawyer, or a stockbroker, or a journalist at once.

You should never try to understand women. Women are pictures. Men are problems. If you want to know what a woman really means—which,

by the way, is always a dangerous thing to do, look at her, don't listen to her.

The history of women is the worst form of tyranny the world has ever known. The tyranny of the weak over the strong. It is the only tyranny that lasts.

Nothing refines but the intellect.

Women are a fascinatingly wilful sex. Every woman is a rebel, and usually in wild revolt against herself.

Men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious. Both are disappointed.

The happiness of a married man depends on the woman he has not married.

The world has been made by fools that wise men may live in it.

The world has always laughed at its own tragedies, that being the only way in which it has been able to bear them. Consequently, whatever the

world has been able to treat seriously, belongs to the comedy side of things.

The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.

Women love us for our defects. If we have enough of them, they will forgive us everything, even our gigantic intellects.

There is no secret of life. Life's aim, if it has one, is simply to be always looking for temptations. There are not nearly enough of them; I sometimes pass a whole day without coming across a single one. It is quite dreadful. It makes one so nervous about the future.

All thought is immoral. Its very essence is destruction. If you think of anything, you kill it. Nothing survives being thought of.

Moderation is a fatal thing. Nothing succeeds like excess.

No woman should have a memory. Memory in woman is the beginning of dowdiness. One can always tell from a woman's bonnet whether she has a memory or not.

Most women in London nowadays seem to furnish their rooms with nothing but orchids, foreigners, and French novels.

Men know life too early—women know life too late; that is the difference between men and women.

THE DECAY OF LYING.

The justification of a character in a novel is not that other persons are what they are, but that the author is what he is. Otherwise the novel is not a work of art.

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST.

Conversation should touch everything, but should concentrate itself on nothing.

A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.

See, it is dawn already. Draw back the curtains and open the windows wide. How cool the morning air is! Piccadilly lies at our feet like a long riband of silver. A faint purple mist hangs over the Park, and the shadows of the white houses are purple. It is too late to sleep. Let us go down to Covent Garden and look at the roses. Come! I am tired of thought.

Sebastian Melmoth.

SEBASTIAN MELMOTH.

The mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death.

Women are made to be loved, not to be understood.

It is absurd to have a hard and fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't. More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.

Women, as some one says, love with their ears, just as men love with their eyes, if they ever love at all.

Nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

Beauty is the only thing that time cannot harm. Philosophies fall away like sand, creeds follow one

another, but what is beautiful is a joy for all seasons, a possession for all eternity.

Questions are never indiscreet; answers sometimes are.

The only thing that one really knows about human nature is that it changes.

Anybody can sympathise with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very fine nature to sympathise with a friend's success.

A man who does not think for himself does not think at all.

Nowadays people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its ideal is love. Its purification is sacrifice.

In old days nobody pretended to be a bit better than his neighbour. In fact, to be a bit better than one's neighbour was considered excessively vulgar and middle-class. Nowadays, with our modern mania for morality, every one has to pose as a

paragon of purity, incorruptibility, and all the other seven deadly virtues. And what is the result? You all go over like ninepins—one after the other.

All sympathy is fine, but sympathy with suffering is the least fine mode.

Actors are so fortunate. They can choose whether they will appear in tragedy or in comedy, whether they will suffer or make merry, laugh or shed tears. But in real life it is different. Most men and women are forced to perform parts for which they have no qualifications. The world is a stage, but the play is badly cast.

He who stands most remote from his age is he who mirrors it best.

Life is not governed by will or intention. Life is a question of nerves and fibres and slowly built up cells, in which thought hides itself and passion has its dreams.

As long as a woman can look ten years younger than her own daughter she is perfectly satisfied.

Public and private life are different things. They have different laws and move on different lines.

When one is placed in the position of guardian one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so.

I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing.

An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself.

If the lower classes don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

If a woman cannot make her mistakes charming she is only a female.

It is always with the best intentions that the worst work is done.

It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating.

Relations are simply a tedious pack of people who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

Truth is a very complex thing, and politics is a very complex business. There are wheels within wheels. One may be under certain obligations to people that one must pay. Sooner or later in political life one has to compromise. Every one does.

Men can love what is beneath them—things unworthy, stained, dishonoured. We women worship when we love; and when we lose our worship we lose everything.

The proper basis for marriage is a mutual misunderstanding.

There are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life fully, entirely, completely, or dragging out some false, shallow, de-

grading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands.

When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic.

An acquaintance that begins with a compliment is sure to develop into a real friendship. It starts in the right manner.

Science can never grapple with the irrational. That is why it has no future before it in this world.

The happy people of the world have their value, but only the negative value of foils. They throw up and emphasise the beauty and the fascination of the unhappy.

It is not wise to find symbols in everything that one sees. It makes life too full of terrors.

Comfort is the only thing our civilisation can give us.

Politics are my only pleasure. You see, nowadays it is not fashionable to flirt till one is forty, or to be romantic till one is forty-five, so we poor women who are under thirty, or say we are, have nothing open to us but politics or philanthropy. And philanthropy seems to me to have become simply the refuge of people who wish to annoy their fellow creatures. I prefer politics. I think they are more . . . becoming.

One's past is what one is. It is the only way by which people should be judged.

In a very ugly and sensible age the arts borrow, not from life, but from each other.

Secrets from other people's wives are a necessary luxury in modern life. So, at least, I am told at the club by people who are bald enough to know better. But no man should have a secret from his own wife. She invariably finds it out. Women have a wonderful instinct about things. They discover everything except the obvious.

To recommend thrift to the poor is both grotesque and insulting. It is like advising a man who is starving to eat less.

A thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

I am always saying what I shouldn't say; in fact, I usually say what I really think—a great mistake nowadays. It makes one so liable to be misunderstood.

Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes.

The true perfection of man lies, not in what man has, but in what man is.

People talk so much about the beauty of confidence. They seem to entirely ignore the much more subtle beauty of doubt. To believe is very dull, to doubt is intensely engrossing. To be on the alert is to live, to be lulled into security is to die.

Every effect that one produces gives one an enemy. To be popular, one must be a mediocrity.

A high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness.

There are terrible temptations that it requires strength—strength and courage—to yield to. To stake all one's life on one throw—whether the stake be power or pleasure, I care not—there is no weakness in that. There is a horrible, a terrible courage.

All charming people are spoiled. It is the secret of their attraction.

There is more to be said for stupidity than people imagine. Personally, I have a great admiration for stupidity. It is a sort of fellow-feeling, I suppose.

All men are monsters. The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders.

Love art for its own sake, and then all things that you need will be added to you. This devotion to beauty and to the creation of beautiful things

is the test of all great civilisations; it is what makes the life of each citizen a sacrament and not a speculation.

It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing.

With a proper background women can do anything.

Chiromancy is a most dangerous science, and one that ought not to be encouraged, except in a "tête-à-tête."

The work of art is beautiful by being what art never has been; and to measure it by the standard of the past is to measure it by a standard on the reflection of which its real perfection depends.

Costume is a growth, an evolution, and a most important, perhaps the most important, sign of the manners, customs, and mode of life of each century.

I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love, but there

is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty.

What consoles one nowadays is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date.

Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

Unless one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow.

Shallow sorrows and shallow loves live on. The loves and sorrows that are great are destroyed by their own plenitude.

An eternal smile is much more wearisome than a perpetual frown. The one sweeps away all possibilities, the other suggests a thousand.

To disagree with three-fourths of England on all points is one of the first elements of vanity, which is a deep source of consolation in all moments of spiritual doubt.

Women live by their emotions and for them, they have no philosophy of life.

As long as war is regarded as wicked it will always have a fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar it will cease to be popular.

We spend our days, each one of us, in looking for the secret of life. Well, the secret of life is in art.

The truth isn't quite the sort of thing that one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl.

If one plays good music people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk.

Englishwomen conceal their feelings till after they are married. They show them then.

Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it.

One's days are too brief to take the burden of another's sorrows on one's shoulders. Each man lives his own life, and pays his own price for living it. The only pity is that one has to pay so

often for a single fault. One has to pay over and over again, indeed. In her dealings with man Destiny never closes her accounts.

Of Shakespeare it may be said that he was the first to see the dramatic value of doublets and that a climax may depend on a crinoline.

What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position and prevents one from keeping it up.

It was a fatal day when the public discovered that the pen is mightier than the paving-stone and can be made as offensive as a brickbat.

All beautiful things belong to the same age.

Modern pictures are, no doubt, delightful to look at. At least, some of them are. But they are quite impossible to live with; they are too clever, too assertive, too intellectual. Their meaning is too obvious and their method too clearly defined. One exhausts what they have to say in a

very short time, and then they become as tedious as one's relations.

To know nothing about our great men is one of the necessary elements of English education.

The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either and modern literature a complete impossibility.

You may laugh, but it is a great thing to come across a woman who thoroughly understands one.

The number of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public.

The chief thing that makes life a failure from the artistic point of view is the thing that lends to life its sordid security—the fact that one can never repeat exactly the same emotion.

We teach people how to remember, we never teach them how to grow.

It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.

It is only the modern that ever become old-fashioned.

It is only the Philistine who seeks to estimate a personality by the vulgar test of production.

Musical people are so absurdly unreasonable. They always want one to be perfectly dumb at the very moment when one is longing to be absolutely deaf.

Nothing is so dangerous as being too modern. One is apt to grow old-fashioned quite suddenly.

The fact of a man being a poisoner is nothing against his prose. The domestic virtues are not the true basis of art.

French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse.

It has often been made a subject of reproach against artists and men of letters that they are lacking in wholeness and completeness of nature. As a rule this must necessarily be so. That very concentration of vision and inversity of purpose which is the characteristic of the artistic temperament is in itself a mode of limitation. To those who are preoccupied with the beauty of form nothing else seems of so much importance.

The work of art is to dominate the spectator. The spectator is not to dominate the work of art.

One should sympathise with the joy, the beauty, the colour of life. The less said about life's sores the better.

You can't make people good by Act of Parliament—that is something.

It is perfectly monstrous the way people go about nowadays saying things against one behind one's back that are absolutely and entirely true.

The truth is a thing I get rid of as soon as possible. Bad habit, by the way, makes one very un-

popular at the club . . . with the older members. They call it being conceited. Perhaps it is.

Men are such cowards. They outrage every law in the world and are afraid of the world's tongue.

To know the principles of the highest art is to know the principles of all the arts.

When I am in trouble eating is the only thing that consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as anyone who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink.

When one is going to lead an entirely new life one requires regular and wholesome meals.

Men become old, but they never become good.

By persistently remaining single a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

I think that in practical life there is something about success, actual success, that is a little un-

scrupulous, something about ambition that is unscrupulous always.

Every man of ambition has to fight his century with its own weapons. What this century worships is wealth. The god of this century is wealth. To succeed one must have wealth. At all costs one must have wealth.

Moderation is a fatal thing. Enough is as bad as a meal. More than enough is as good as a feast.

The English can't stand a man who is always saying he is in the right, but they are very fond of a man who admits he has been in the wrong. It is one of the best things in them.

Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship.

Everybody is clever nowadays. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. This has become an absolute public nuisance.

I don't think man has much capacity for development. He has got as far as he can, and that is not far, is it?

I am not quite sure that I quite know what pessimism really means. All I do know is that life cannot be understood without much charity, cannot be lived without much charity. It is love, and not German philosophy, that is the explanation of this world, whatever may be the explanation of the next.

I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit: touch it, and the blossom is gone.

The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately, in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square.

No woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating.

Men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than ancient, history supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, history would be quite unreadable.

I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

It is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth.

The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile.

Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women who have of their own free choice remained thirty-five for years.

Never speak disrespectfully of society. Only people who can't get into it do that.

It is always painful to part with people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from any one to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

One is tempted to define man as a rational animal who always loses his temper when he is called upon to act in accordance with the dictates of reason.

The essence of thought, as the essence of life, is growth.

We are never more true to ourselves than when we are inconsistent.

There is always something ridiculous about the emotions of people whom one has ceased to love.

We live in an age when unnecessary things are our only necessities.

One should never make one's début with a scandal. One should reserve that to give an interest to one's old age.

It is so easy for people to have sympathy with suffering. It is so difficult for them to have sympathy with thought.

There is a luxury in self-reproach. When we blame ourselves we feel that no one else has a right to blame us. It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution.

Life makes us pay too high a price for its wares, and we purchase the meanest of its secrets at a cost that is monstrous and infinite.

This horrid House of Commons quite ruins our husbands for us. I think the Lower House by far the greatest blow to a happy married life that there has been since that terrible thing they called the Higher Education of Women was invented.

Once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don't like that. It makes men so very attractive.

Experience is a question of instinct about life.

What is true about art is true about life.

One can always be kind to people about whom one cares nothing.

I like men who have a future and women who have a past.

Women, as some witty Frenchman put it, inspire us with the desire to do masterpieces and always prevent us from carrying them out.

In matters of grave importance style, not sincerity, is the vital thing.

The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her if she is pretty and to some one else if she is plain.

Don't let us go to life for our fulfilment or our experience. It is a thing narrowed by circumstances, incoherent in its utterance, and without that fine correspondence of form and spirit which is the only thing that can satisfy the artistic and critical temperament.

A mother who doesn't part with a daughter every season has no real affection.

To be good is to be in harmony with oneself. Discord is to be forced to be in harmony with others.

A really grand passion is comparatively rare nowadays. It is the privilege of people who have nothing to do. That is the one use of the idle classes in a country.

What is truth? In matters of religion it is simply the opinion that has survived. In matters of science it is the ultimate sensation. In matters of art it is one's last mood.

Life cheats us with shadows, like a puppet-master. We ask it for pleasure. It gives it to us, with bitterness and disappointment in its train. We come across some noble grief that we think will lend the purple dignity of tragedy to our days, but it passes away from us, and things less noble take its place, and on some grey, windy dawn, or odorous eve of silence and of silver, we find ourselves looking with callous wonder, or dull heart

of stone, at the tress of gold-flecked hair that we had once so wildly worshipped and so madly kissed.

Self-culture is the true ideal for man.

The meaning of any beautiful created thing is, at least, as much in the soul of him who looks at it as it was in his soul who wrought it. Nay, it is rather the beholder who lends to the beautiful thing its myriad meanings, and makes it marvellous for us, and sets it in some new relation to the age, so that it becomes a vital portion of our lives and a symbol of what we pray for, or perhaps of what, having prayed for, we fear that we may receive.

The Renaissance was great because it sought to solve no social problem, and busied itself not about such things, but suffered the individual to develop freely, beautifully, and naturally, and so had great and individual artists and great and individual men.

In England people actually try to be brilliant at breakfast. That is so dreadful of them! Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast.

The secret of life is never to have an emotion that is unbecoming.

No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything.

The development of the race depends on the development of the individual, and where self-culture has ceased to be the ideal the intellectual standard is instantly lowered and often ultimately lost.

An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.

When a man is old enough to do wrong he should be old enough to do right also.

In married life three is company and two is none.

Out of ourselves we can never pass, nor can there be in creation what in the creator there was not.

Don't tell me that you have exhausted life. When a man says that, one knows that life has exhausted him.

When a woman marries again it is because she detested her first husband. When a man marries again it is because he adored his first wife. Women try their luck; men risk theirs.

After a good dinner one can forgive anybody, even one's own relations.

It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stockbrokers do that, and then merely at dinner-parties.

It is awfully hard work doing nothing. However, I don't mind hard work when there is no definite object of any kind.

All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime.

While, in the opinion of society, contemplation is the gravest thing of which any citizen can be guilty, in the opinion of the highest culture it is the proper occupation of man.

If a woman wants to hold a man she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him.

Beauty has as many meanings as man has moods. It is the symbol of symbols. It reveals everything, because it expresses nothing. When it shows us itself it shows us the whole fiery-coloured world.

Anything approaching to the free play of the mind is practically unknown amongst us. People cry out against the sinner, yet it is not the sinful but the stupid who are our shame. There is no sin except stupidity.

One regrets the loss even of one's worst habits. Perhaps one regrets them the most. They are such an essential part of one's personality.

It is through art, and through art only, that we can realise our perfection; through art, and through art only, that we can shield ourselves from the sordid perils of actual existence.

It often happens that the real tragedies of life occur in such an inartistic manner that they hurt us by their crude violence, their absolute incoherence, their absurd want of meaning, their entire lack of style. They affect us just as vulgarity

affects us. They give us an impression of sheer brute force, and we revolt against that. Sometimes, however, a tragedy that possesses artistic elements of beauty crosses our lives. If these elements of beauty are real the whole thing simply appeals to our sense of dramatic effect. Suddenly we find that we are no longer the actors but the spectators of the play. Or rather we are both. We watch ourselves, and the mere wonder of the spectacle enthrals us.

When a woman finds out that her husband is absolutely indifferent to her, she either becomes dreadfully dowdy or wears very smart bonnets that some other woman's husband has to pay for.

It is a mistake to think that the passion one feels in creation is ever really shown in the work one creates. Art is always more abstract than we fancy. Form and colour tell us of form and colour—that is all.

People who go in for being consistent have just as many moods as others have. The only difference is that their moods are rather meaningless.

Discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or a nation.

I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap.

It is very painful to me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind.

The man who regards his past is a man who deserves to have no future to look forward to.

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell you the truth.

All women become like their mothers: that is their tragedy. No man does: that is his.

One should always be in love. That is the reason one should never marry.

No man came across two ideal things. Few come across one.

To become the spectator of one's life is to escape the suffering of life.

A community is infinitely more brutalised by the habitual employment of punishment than it is by the occasional occurrence of crime.

The systems that fail are those that rely on the permanency of human nature and not on its growth and development.

All art is immoral.

He to whom the present is the only thing that is present knows nothing of the age in which he lives. To realise the nineteenth century one must realise every century that has preceded it and that has contributed to its making.

Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out.

There is no one type for man. There are as many perfections as there are imperfect men. And while to the claims of charity a man may yield and yet be free, to the claims of conformity no man may yield and remain free at all.

A practical scheme is either a scheme that is already in existence or a scheme that could be carried out under existing conditions.

All imitation in morals and in life is wrong.

Circumstances are the lashes laid on to us by life. Some of us have to receive them with bared ivory backs, and others are permitted to keep on a coat—that is the only difference.

Criticism is itself an art. . . . It is no more to be judged by any low standard of imitation or resemblance than is the work of poet or sculptor. The critic occupies the same relation to the work of art that he criticises as the artist does to the visible world of form and colour or the unseen world of passion and thought. He does not even require for the perfection of his art the finest materials. Anything will serve his purpose.

If we lived long enough to see the results of our actions it may be that those who call themselves good would be filled with a wild remorse and those whom the world calls evil stirred with a noble joy. Each little thing that we do passes into the great machine of life, which may grind our virtues to powder and make them worthless or transform our sins into elements of a new civilisation more marvellous and more splendid than any that has gone before.

Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them, sometimes they forgive them.

One should absorb the colour of life, but one should never remember its details. Details are always vulgar.

Cynicism is merely the art of seeing things as they are instead of as they ought to be.

Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen.

No man is able who is unable to get on, just as no woman is clever who can't succeed in obtaining that worst and most necessary of evils, a husband.

Personality is a very mysterious thing. A man cannot always be estimated by what he does. He may keep the law, and yet be worthless. He may break the law, and yet be fine. He may be bad without ever doing anything bad. He may commit a sin against society, and yet realise through that sin his true perfection.

Man is complete in himself.

It's the old, old story. Love—well, not at first sight—but love at the end of the season, which is so much more satisfactory.

No nice girl should ever waltz with such particularly younger sons! It looks so fast!

I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

My husband is a sort of promissory note; I am tired of meeting him.

There is a fatality about good resolutions—they are always made too late.

The things one feels absolutely certain about are never true. That is the fatality of faith and the lesson of romance.

In the common world of fact the wicked are not punished nor the good rewarded. Success is given to the strong, failure thrust upon the weak.

Nothing should be able to harm a man except himself. Nothing should be able to rob a man at all. What a man really has is what is in him. What is outside of him should be a matter of no importance.

Perplexity and mistrust fan affection into passion, and so bring about those beautiful tragedies that alone make life worth living. Women once felt this, while men did not, and so women once ruled the world.

It is through joy that the individualism of the future will develop itself. Christ made no attempt to reconstruct society, and consequently the

individualism that He preached to man could be realised only through pain or in solitude.

The higher education of men is what I should like to see. Men need it so sadly.

Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old.

Our husbands never appreciate anything in us. We have to go to others for that.

If a man treats life artistically his brain is his heart.

The "Peerage" is the one book a young man about town should know thoroughly, and it is the best thing in fiction the English have ever done.

What is termed sin is an essential element of progress. Without it the world would stagnate or grow old or become colourless. By its curiosity it increases the experience of the race. Through its intensified assertion of individualism it saves us from the commonplace. In its rejection of the

current notions about morality it is one with the higher ethics.

I wonder who it was defined man as a rational animal. It was the most premature definition ever given. Man is many things, but he is not rational.

Thought and language are to the artist instruments of an art.

Ordinary women never appeal to one's imagination. They are limited to their century. No glamour ever transfigures them. One knows their minds as easily as one knows their bonnets. One can always find them. There is no mystery in any of them. They ride in the Park in the morning and chatter at tea parties in the afternoon. They have their stereotyped smile and their fashionable mauve.

Don't run down dyed hair and painted faces. There is an extraordinary charm in them—sometimes.

To have been well brought up is a great drawback nowadays. It shuts one out from so much.

The popular cry of our time is: "Let us return to Life and Nature; they will recreate Art for us and send the red blood coursing through her veins; they will shoe her feet with swiftness and make her hand strong." But alas! we are mistaken in our amiable and well-meant efforts. Nature is always behind the age. And as for Life, she is the solvent that breaks up Art, the enemy that lays waste her house.

There are only two kinds of women—the plain and the coloured. The plain women are very useful. If you want to gain a reputation for respectability you have merely to take them down to supper. The other women are very charming. They commit one mistake, however—they paint in order to try and look young.

Faithfulness is to the emotional life what consistency is to the life of the intellect—simply a confession of failure.

There are many things that we would throw away if we were not afraid that others might pick them up.

Women spoil every romance by trying to make it last for ever.

We make gods of men and they leave us. Others make brutes of them, and they fawn and are faithful.

The husbands of very beautiful women belong to the criminal classes.

Those who are faithful know only the trivial side of love; it is the faithless who know love's tragedies.

An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty.

A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies. I have not got one who is a fool. They are all men of some intellectual power, and consequently they all appreciate me.

The value of an idea has nothing whatever to do with the sincerity of the man who expresses it.

I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world.

The aim of life is self-development. To realise one's nature perfectly—that is what each of us is here for.

Words have not merely music as sweet as that of viol and lute, colour as rich and vivid as any that makes lovely for us the canvas of the Venetian or the Spaniard, and plastic form no less sure and certain than that which reveals itself in marble or in bronze, but thought and passion and spirituality are theirs also—are theirs, indeed, alone.

There is nothing so absolutely pathetic as a really fine paradox. The pun is the clown among jokes, the well-turned paradox is the polished comedian, and the highest comedy verges upon tragedy, just as the keenest edge of tragedy is often tempered by a subtle humour. Our minds are shot with moods as a fabric is shot with colours, and our moods often seem inappropriate. Everything that is true is inappropriate.

The longer one studies life and literature the more strongly one feels that behind everything that is wonderful stands the individual, and that it is not the moment that makes the man but the man who creates the age.

It is a sad thing to think of, but there is no doubt that genius lasts longer than beauty. That accounts for the fact that we all take such pains to over-educate ourselves.

The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit at their ease and gape at the play. If they know nothing of victory, they are at least spared the knowledge of defeat.

To have a capacity for a passion and not to realise it is to make oneself incomplete and limited.

In literature mere egotism is delightful.

If we live for aims we blunt our emotions. If we live for aims we live for one minute, for one day, for one year, instead of for every minute, every day, every year. The moods of one's life:

are life's beauties. To yield to all one's moods is to really live.

Many a young man starts in life with a natural gift for exaggeration, which, if nurtured in congenial and sympathetic surroundings, or by the imitation of the best models, might grow into something really great and wonderful. But, as a rule, he comes to nothing. He either falls into careless habits of accuracy or takes to frequenting the society of the aged and the well informed. Both things are equally fatal to his imagination.

The spirit of an age may be best expressed in the abstract ideal arts, for the spirit itself is abstract and ideal.

As for believing things, I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible.

For those who are not artists, and to whom there is no mode of life but the actual life of fact, pain is the only door to perfection.

The English public always feels perfectly at its ease when a mediocrity is talking to it.

Men always fall into the absurdity of endeavouring to develop the mind, to push it violently forward in this direction or in that. The mind should be receptive, a harp waiting to catch the winds, a pool ready to be ruffled, not a bustling busybody, for ever trotting about on the pavement looking for a new bun shop.

There is nothing more beautiful than to forget, except, perhaps, to be forgotten.

All bad art comes from returning to life and nature, and elevating them into ideals. Life and nature may sometimes be used as part of art's rough material, but before they are of any real service to art they must be translated into artistic conventions. The moment art surrenders its imaginative medium it surrenders everything. As a method, realism is a complete failure, and the two things that every artist should avoid are modernity of form and modernity of subject-matter.

Men may have women's minds, just as women may have the minds of men.

He must be quite respectable. One has never heard his name before in the whole course of one's life, which speaks volumes for a man nowadays.

Literature always anticipates life. It does not copy it, but moulds it to its purpose.

As long as a thing is useful or necessary to us, or affects us in any way, either for pain or pleasure, or appeals strongly to our sympathies, or is a vital part of the environment in which we live, it is outside the proper sphere of art.

I couldn't have a scene in this bonnet; it is far too fragile. A harsh word would ruin it.

Music creates for one a past of which one has been ignorant and fills one with a sense of sorrows that have been hidden from one's tears.

Nothing is so fatal to personality as deliberation.

Learned conversation is either the affectation of the ignorant or the profession of the mentally unemployed.

The Academy is too large and too vulgar. Whenever I have gone there, there have been either so many people that I have not been able to see the pictures—which was dreadful, or so many pictures that I have not been able to see the people—which was worse.

Secrecy seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious or marvellous to us. The commonest thing is delightful if one only hides it.

Conceit is one of the greatest of the virtues, yet how few people recognise it as a thing to aim at and to strive after. In conceit many a man and woman has found salvation, yet the average person goes on all-fours grovelling after modesty.

It is difficult not to be unjust to what one loves.

Humanity will always love Rousseau for having confessed his sins, not to a friend, but to the world.

Just as those who do not love Plato more than truth cannot pass beyond the threshold of the

Academe, so those who do not love beauty more than truth never know the inmost shrine of art.

There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction: the sort of fatality that seems to dog, through history, the faltering steps of kings. It is better not to be different from one's fellows.

To be born, or at any rate bred, in a handbag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that reminds one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution.

Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.

Art never expresses anything but itself. It has an independent life, just as thought has, and develops purely on its own lines. It is not necessarily realistic in an age of realism nor spiritual in an age of faith. So far from being the creation of its time it is usually in direct opposition to it, and the only history that it preserves for us is the history of its own progress.

People who mean well always do badly. They are like the ladies who wear clothes that don't fit them in order to show their piety. Good intentions are invariably ungrammatical.

Man can believe the impossible, but man can never believe the improbable.

When art is more varied, nature will, no doubt, be more varied also.

If a man is sufficiently imaginative to produce evidence in support of a lie he might just as well speak the truth at once.

The ancient historians gave us delightful fiction in the form of fact; the modern novelist presents us with dull facts under the guise of fiction.

Nature is no great mother who has borne us. She is our own creation. It is in our brain that she quickens to life. Things are because we see them, and what we see, and how we see it, depends on the arts that have influenced us. To look at a thing is very different from seeing a thing. One does not see anything until one sees its beauty.

The proper school to learn art in is not life but art.

I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much.

I wouldn't marry a man with a future before him for anything under the sun.

I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly, but I don't see any chance of it just at present.

Modern memoirs are generally written by people who have entirely lost their memories and have never done anything worth recording.

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.

Women are like minors; they live upon their expectations.

Twisted minds are as natural to some people as twisted bodies.



...the face to the other side...

THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE.

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Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing it is always from the noblest motives.

I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me. Somehow, it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old, and it spoils one's career at critical moments.

I don't play accurately—any one can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for life.

I delight in men over seventy. They always offer one the devotion of a lifetime.

Everybody who is incapable of learning has taken to teaching—that is really what our enthusiasm for education has come to.

Nature hates mind.

Where we differ from each other is purely in accidentals—in dress, manner, tone of voice, religious opinions, personal appearance, tricks of habit, and the like.

The more we study Art the less we care for Nature. What Art really reveals to us is Nature's lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition. . . . It is fortunate for us, however, that Nature is so imperfect, as otherwise we should have had no Art at all. Art is our spirited protest, our gallant attempt to teach Nature her proper place. As for the infinite variety of Nature, that is a pure myth. It is not to be found in Nature herself. It resides in the imagination or fancy or cultivated blindness of the man who looks at her.

Facts are not merely finding a footing-place in history, but they are usurping the domain of fancy and have invaded the kingdom of romance. Their chilling touch is over everything. They are vulgarising mankind.

Ordinary people wait till life discloses to them its secrets, but to the few, to the elect, the mysteries of life are revealed before the veil is drawn away. Sometimes this is the effect of art, and chiefly of the art of literature which deals immediately with the passions and the intellect. But now and then a complex personality takes the place

and assumes the office of art; is, indeed, in its way, a real work of art, Life having its elaborate masterpieces just as poetry has, or sculpture, or painting.

Thinking is the most unhealthy thing in the world, and people die of it just as they die of any other disease.

The aim of the liar is simply to charm, to delight, to give pleasure. He is the very basis of civilised society.

It is quite a mistake to believe, as many people do, that the mind shows itself in the face. Vice may sometimes write itself in lines and changes of contour, but that is all. Our faces are really masks given to us to conceal our minds with.

What on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.

Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

In every sphere of life form is the beginning of things. The rhythmic, harmonious gestures of dancing convey, Plato tells us, both rhythm and harmony into the mind. Forms are the food of faith, cried Newman, in one of those great moments of sincerity that make us admire and know the man. He was right, though he may not have known how terribly right he was. The creeds are believed not because they are rational, but because they are repeated. Yes; form is everything. It is the secret of life. Find expression for a sorrow and it will become dear to you. Find expression for a joy and you intensify its ecstasy. Do you wish to love? Use love's litany and the words will create the yearning from which the world fancies that they spring. Have you a grief that corrodes your heart? Learn its utterance from Prince Hamlet and Queen Constance, and you will find that mere expression is a mode of consolation; and that form, which is the birth of passion, is also the death of pain. And so, to return to the sphere of art, it is form that creates not merely the critical temperament, but also the æsthetic instinct that re-

veals to one all things under the condition of beauty. Start with the worship of form, and there is no secret in art that will not be revealed to you.

It is only the intellectually lost who ever argue.

There is nothing so interesting as telling a good man or woman how bad one has been. It is intellectually fascinating. One of the greatest pleasures of having been wicked is that one has so much to say to the good.

Laws are made in order that people in authority may not remember them, just as marriages are made in order that the divorce court may not play about idly.

Art begins with abstract decoration, with purely imaginative and pleasurable work dealing with what is unreal and non-existent. This is the first stage. Then Life becomes fascinated with this new wonder, and asks to be admitted into the charmed circle. Art takes life as part of her rough material, recreates it, and refashions it in fresh forms; is absolutely indifferent to fact; invents,

imagines, dreams, and keeps between herself and reality the impenetrable barrier of beautiful style, of decorative or ideal treatment. The third stage is when Life gets the upper hand and drives Art out into the wilderness. This is the true decadence, and it is from this that we are now suffering.

Good intentions have been the ruin of the world. The only people who have achieved anything have been those who have had no intentions at all.

You know I am not a champion of marriage. The real drawback to marriage is that it makes one unselfish, and unselfish people are colourless—they lack individuality. Still, there are certain temperaments that marriage makes more complex. They retain their egotism, and add to it many other egos. They are forced to have more than one life. They become more highly organised, and to be highly organised is, I should fancy, the object of man's existence. Besides, every experience is of value, and whatever one may say against marriage it is certainly an experience.

Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.

When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself.

Faith is the most plural thing I know. We are all supposed to believe in the same thing in different ways. It is like eating out of the same dish with different coloured spoons.

Experience is of no ethical value. It is merely the name men give to their mistakes. Moralists have, as a rule, regarded it as a mode of warning, have claimed for it a certain ethical efficacy in the formation of character, have praised it as something that teaches us what to follow and shows us what to avoid. But there is no motive power in experience. It is as little of an active cause as conscience itself. All that it really demonstrates is that our future will be the same as our past, and that the sin we have done once, and with loathing, we shall do many times, and with joy.

Sensations are the details that build up the stories of our lives.

No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style.

She looks like an "edition-de-luxe" of a wicked French novel meant specially for the English market.

I never knew what terror was before; I know it now. It is as if a hand of ice were laid upon one's heart. It is as if one's heart were beating itself to death in some empty hollow.

No artist desires to prove anything. Even things that are true can be proved.

One knows so well the popular idea of health. The English country gentleman galloping along after a fox—the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable.

People seldom tell the truths that are worth telling. We ought to choose our truths as carefully as we choose our lies, and to select our virtues with as much thought as we bestow upon the selection of our enemies.

Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope.

Marriage is a sort of forcing house. It brings strange sins to fruit, and sometimes strange renunciations.

The moral life of man forms part of the subject-matter of the artist, but the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium.

A sense of duty is like some horrible disease. It destroys the tissues of the mind, as certain complaints destroy the tissues of the body. The catechism has a good deal to answer for.

They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only beauty.

Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.

Few people have sufficient strength to resist the preposterous claims of orthodoxy.

She wore far too much rouge last night and not quite enough clothes. That is always a sign of despair in a woman.

A virtue is like a city set upon a hill—it cannot be hid. We can conceal our vices if we care to—for a time at least—but a virtue will out.

Can't make out how you stand London society. The thing has gone to the dogs; a lot of damned nobodies talking about nothing.

You don't know what an existence they lead down there. It is pure, unadulterated country life. They get up early because they have so much to do, and go to bed early because they have so little to think about.

Nothing is so fatal to a personality as the keeping of promises, unless it be telling the truth.

Mrs. Cheveley is one of those very modern women of our time who find a new scandal as becoming as a new bonnet, and air them both in the Park every afternoon at 5.30. I am sure she adores scandals, and that the sorrow of her life at present is that she can't manage to have enough of them.

The world divides actions into three classes: good actions, bad actions that you may do, and

bad actions that you may not do. If you stick to the good actions you are respected by the good. If you stick to the bad actions that you may do you are respected by the bad. But if you perform the bad actions that no one may do, then the good and the bad set upon you, and you are lost indeed.

To me the word "natural" means all that is middle class, all that is of the essence of Jingoism, all that is colourless and without form and void. It might be a beautiful word, but it is the most debased coin in the currency of language.

I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment's solitude.

It is only when we have learned to love forgetfulness that we have learned the art of living.

To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.

The world, taken "en masse," is a monster, crammed with prejudices, packed with prepossessions, cankered with what it calls virtues, a Puri-

tan, a prig. And the art of life is the art of defiance. To defy—that is what we ought to live for, instead of living, as we do, to acquiesce.

Nothing is more painful to me than to come across virtue in a person in whom I have never suspected its existence. It is like finding a needle in a bundle of hay. It pricks you. If we have virtue we should warn people of it.

The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things.

If one intends to be good one must take it up as a profession. It is quite the most engrossing one in the world.

I like Wagner's music better than anybody's. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without other people hearing what one says.

Childhood is one long career of innocent eavesdropping, of hearing what one ought not to hear.

The highest, as the lowest form of criticism, is a mode of autobiography.

The only things worth saying are those that we forget, just as the only things worth doing are those that the world is surprised at.

Maturity is one long career of saying what one ought not to say. That is the art of conversation.

Virtue is generally merely a form of deficiency, just as vice is an assertion of intellect.

People teach in order to conceal their ignorance, as people smile in order to conceal their tears.

To be unnatural is often to be great. To be natural is generally to be stupid.

To lie finely is an art, to tell the truth is to act according to nature.

People who talk sense are like people who break stones in the road: they cover one with dust and splinters.

An echo is often more beautiful than the voice it repeats.



Phrases and Philosophies.



PHRASES AND PHILOSOPHIES.

The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has as yet discovered.

Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others.

If the poor only had profiles there would be no difficulty in solving the problem of poverty.

Those who see any difference between soul and body have neither.

A really well-made buttonhole is the only link between Art and Nature.

Religions die when they are proved to be true. Science is the record of dead religions.

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The well-bred contradict other people. The wise contradict themselves.

Nothing that actually occurs is of the smallest importance.

Dulness is the coming of age of seriousness.

In all unimportant matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential.

If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.

Pleasure is the only thing we should live for. Nothing ages like happiness.

It is only by not paying our bills that one can hope to live in the memory of the commercial classes.

No crime is vulgar, but vulgarity is crime. Vulgarity is the conduct of others.

Only the shallow know themselves.

Time is waste of money.

One should always be a little improbable.

The only way to atone for being occasionally a little over-dressed is by being always absolutely over-educated.

To be premature is to be perfect.

Any preoccupation with ideas of what is right or wrong in conduct shows an arrested intellectual development.

Ambition is the last refuge of the failure.

A truth ceases to be true when more than one person believes in it.

In examinations the foolish ask questions that the wise cannot answer.

Greek dress was in its essence inartistic. Nothing should reveal the body but the body.

One should either be a work of Art, or wear a work of Art.

It is only the superficial qualities that last. Man's deeper nature is soon found out.

Industry is the root of all ugliness.

The ages live in history through their anachronisms.

It is only the gods who taste of death. Apollo has passed away, but Hyacinth, whom men say he slew, lives on. Nero and Narcissus are always with us.

The old believe everything; the middle-aged suspect everything; the young know everything.

The condition of perfection is idleness; the aim of perfection is youth.

Only the great masters of style ever succeed in being obscure.

There is something tragic about the enormous number of young men there are in England at the present moment who start life with perfect profiles, and end by adopting some useful profession.

To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.

It is important *not* to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life.

Avoid arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect.

In the case of a very fascinating woman, sex is a challenge, not a defence.

The London Season is entirely matrimonial; people are either hunting for husbands or hiding from them.

Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike.

Self-sacrifice is a thing that should be put down by law. It is so demoralising to the people for whom one sacrifices oneself.

Oscar Wilde's Literary Art.



OSCAR WILDE'S LITERARY ART.

THE PRIEST AND THE ACOLYTE.

The world is very stern with those that thwart her. She lays down her precepts, and woe to those who dare to think for themselves, who venture to exercise their own discretion as to whether they shall allow their individuality and natural characteristics to be stamped out, to be obliterated under the leaden fingers of convention. Truly, convention is the stone that has become head of the corner in the jerry-built temple of our superficial, self-assertive civilisation.

"And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

ROSE-LEAF AND APPLE-LEAF.

The most joyous poet is not he who sows the desolate highways of this world with the barren seed of laughter, but he who makes his sorrow most musical, this indeed being the meaning of joy in

art—that incommunicable element of artistic delight which, in poetry, for instance, comes from what Keats called the “sensuous life of verse,” the element of song in the singing, made so pleasurable to us by that wonder of motion which often has its origin in mere musical impulse, and in painting is to be sought for, from the subject never, but from the pictorial charm only—the scheme and symphony of the colour, the satisfying beauty of the design: so that the ultimate expression of our artistic movement in painting has been, not in the spiritual visions of the pre-Raphaelites, for all their marvel of Greek legend and their mystery of Italian song, but in the work of such men as Whistler and Albert Moore, who have raised design and colour to the ideal level of poetry and music.

But it is not enough that a work of art should conform to the æsthetic demands of the age: there should be also about it, if it is to give us any permanent delight, the impress of a distinct individuality.

One’s real life is so often the life that one does not lead; and beautiful poems, like threads of

beautiful silks, may be woven into many patterns and to suit many designs, all wonderful and all different.

Sincerity and constancy will the artist, indeed, have always, but sincerity in art is merely that plastic perfection of execution without which a poem or a painting, however noble its sentiment or human its origin, is but wasted and unreal work, and the constancy of the artist cannot be to any definite rule or system of living, but to that principle of beauty only through which the inconstant shadows of his life are in their most fleeting moment arrested and made permanent.

Amboise, that little village with its grey slate roofs and steep streets and gaunt, grim gateway, where the quiet cottages nestle like white pigeons into the sombre clefts of the great bastioned rock, and the stately Renaissance houses stand silent and apart—very desolate now, but with some memory of the old days still lingering about the delicately twisted pillars, and the carved doorways with their grotesque animals, and laughing masks and quaint heraldic devices, all reminding one of a people who could not think life real till they had made it fantastic.

To us the rule of art is not the rule of morals. In an ethical system, indeed, of any gentle mercy good intentions will, one is fain to fancy, have their recognition; but of those that would enter the serene House of Beauty the question that we ask is not what they had ever meant to do, but what they have done. Their pathetic intentions are of no value to us, but their realised creations only.

Nor, in looking at a work of art, should we be dreaming of what it symbolises, but rather loving it for what it is. Indeed, the transcendental spirit is alien to the spirit of art. The metaphysical mind of Asia may create for itself the monstrous and many-beasted idol, but to the Greek, pure Artist, that work is most instinct with spiritual life which conforms most closely to the perfect facts of physical life also. Nor, in its primary aspect, has a painting, for instance, any more spiritual message or meaning for us than a blue tile from the wall of Damascus, or a Hitzen vase. It is a beautifully coloured surface, nothing more, and affects us by no suggestion stolen from philosophy, no pathos pilfered from literature, no feeling filched from a poet, but by its own incommuni-

cable artistic essence—by that selection of truth which we call style, and that relation of values which is the draughtsmanship of painting, by the whole quality of the workmanship, the arabesque of the design, the splendour of the colour, for these things are enough to stir the most divine and remote of the chords which make music in our soul, and colour, indeed, is of itself a mystical presence in things, and tone a kind of sentiment.

That curious intensity of vision by which, in moments of overmastering sadness and despair ungovernable, artistic things will live in one's memory with vivid realism caught from the life which they help one to forget—an old grey tomb in Flanders with a strange legend on it, making one think how, perhaps, passion does live on after death, a necklace of blue and amber beads and a broken mirror found in a girl's grave at Rome, a marble image of a boy habited like Eros, and, with the pathetic tradition of a great king's sorrow lingering about it like a purple shadow, over all these the tired spirit broods with that calm and certain joy that one gets when one has found something that the ages never dull and the world cannot harm; and with it comes that desire of Greek things which is

often an artistic method of expressing one's desire for perfection, and that longing for the old dead days which is so modern, so incomplete, so touching, being, in a way, the inverted torch of Hope, which burns the hand it should guide; and for many things a little sadness, and for all things a great love; and lastly, in the pine wood by the sea, once more the quick and vital pulse of joyous youth leaping and laughing in every line, the frank and fearless freedom of wave and wind waking into fire life's burnt-out ashes, and into song the silent lips of pain—how clearly one seems to see it all, the long colonnade of pines, with sea and sky peeping in here and there like a flitting of silver; the open place in the green, deep heart of the wood with the moss-grown altar to the old Italian god in it, and the flowers all about, cyclamen in the shadowy places, and the stars of the white narcissus lying like snowflakes over the grass, where the quick, bright-eyed lizard starts by the stone, and the snake lies coiled lazily in the sun on the hot sand, and overhead the gossamer floats from the branches like thin, tremulous threads of gold—the scene is so perfect for its motive, for surely here, if anywhere, the real gladness of life might be revealed to one's youth—the gladness that

comes, not from the rejection, but from the absorption of all passion, and is like that serene calm that dwells in the faces of the Greek statues, and which despair and sorrow cannot disturb but intensify only.

The land was an ordinary land enough, and bare, too, when one thought of Italy, and how the oleanders were robing the hillsides by Genoa in scarlet, and the cyclamen filling with its purple every valley from Florence to Rome; for there was not much real beauty, perhaps, in it, only long, white dusty roads and straight rows of formal poplars; but now and then some little breaking gleam of broken light would lend to the grey field and the silent barn a secret and a mystery that were hardly their own, would transfigure for one exquisite moment the peasants passing down through the vineyard, or the shepherd watching on the hill, would tip the willows with silver, and touch the river into gold.

CRUELITIES OF PRISON LIFE.

The cruelty that is practised by day and night on children in English prisons is incredible, except to

those who have witnessed it and are aware of the brutality of the system. Ordinary cruelty is simply stupidity. It comes from the entire want of imagination. It is the result in our days of stereotyped systems, of hard-and-fast rules, of centralisation, of officialism, and of irresponsible authority. Wherever there is centralisation there is stupidity. What is inhuman in modern life is officialism. Authority is as destructive to those who exercise it as it is to those on whom it is exercised.

The present treatment of children is terrible, primarily from people not understanding the peculiar psychology of a child's nature. A child can understand a punishment inflicted by an individual, such as a parent or guardian, and bear it with a certain amount of acquiescence. What it cannot understand is a punishment inflicted by Society. It cannot realise what Society is. With grown people it is, of course, the reverse. Those of us who are either in prison or have been sent there, can understand, and do understand, what that collective force called Society means, and whatever we may think of its methods or claims, we can force ourselves to accept it. Punishment inflicted on us by an individual, on the other hand,

is a thing that no grown person endures or is expected to endure.

This terror that seizes and dominates the child, as it seizes the grown man also, is of course intensified beyond power of expression by the solitary cellular system of our prisons. Every child is confined to its cell for twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four. This is the appalling thing. To shut up a child in a dimly lit cell for twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four is an example of the cruelty of stupidity. If an individual, parent or guardian, did this to a child he would be severely punished. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children would take the matter up at once. There would be on all hands the utmost detestation of whomsoever had been guilty of such cruelty. A heavy sentence would undoubtedly follow conviction. But our own actual society does worse itself, and to the child to be so treated by a strange abstract force, of whose claim it has no cognisance, is much worse than it would be to receive the same treatment from its father or mother, or some one it knew. The inhuman treatment of a child is always inhuman, by whomsoever it is inflicted. But

inhuman treatment by Society is to the child the more terrible because there is no appeal.

As regards the children, a great deal has been talked and written lately about the contaminating influence of prison on young children. What is said is quite true. A child is utterly contaminated by prison life. But the contaminating influence is not that of the prisoners. It is that of the whole prison system—of the governor, the chaplain, the warders, the lonely cell, the isolation, the revolting food, the rules of the Prison Commissioners, the mode of discipline, as it is termed, of the life. Every care is taken to isolate a child from the sight even of all prisoners over sixteen years of age. Children sit behind a curtain in chapel, and are sent to take exercise in small, sunless yards—sometimes a stone-yard, sometimes a yard at the back of the mills—rather than that they should see the elder prisoners at exercise. But the only really humanising influence in prison is the influence of the prisoners. Their cheerfulness under terrible circumstances, their sympathy for each other, their humility, their gentleness, their pleasant smiles of greeting when they meet each other, their complete acquiescence in their punishments,

are all quite wonderful, and I myself learnt many sound lessons from them.

THE ARTIST.

One evening there came into his soul the desire to fashion an image of "The Pleasure that Abideth for a Moment." And he went forth into the world to look for bronze. For he could only think in bronze.

But all the bronze of the whole world had disappeared; nor anywhere in the whole world was there any bronze to be found, save only the bronze of the image of "The Sorrow that Endureth for Ever."

Now this image he had himself, and with his own hands, fashioned, and had set on the tomb of the one thing he had loved in life. On the tomb of the dead thing he had most loved had he set this image of his own fashioning, that it might serve as a sign of the love of a man that dieth not, and a symbol of the sorrow of man that endureth for ever. And in the whole world there was no other bronze save the bronze of this image.

And he took the image he had fashioned, and set it in a great furnace, and gave it to the fire.

And out of the bronze of the image of "The Sor-

row that Endureth for Ever" he fashioned an image of "The Pleasure that Abideth for a Moment."

THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE.

In the womb of the French revolution, and in the storm and terror of that wild time, tendencies were hidden away that the artistic renaissance bent to her own service when the time came. And that desire for perfection which lay at the base of the revolution found in a young English poet its most complete and flawless realisation. Phidias and the achievements in Greek art are foreshadowed in Homer. Dante prefigures for us the passion and colour and intensity of Italian painting. The modern love of landscape dates from Rousseau, and it is in Keats that one discerns the beginning of the artistic renaissance of England. He was the forerunner of the pre-Raphaelite school.

Great eras in the history of arts have been eras not only of increased feeling, but also of new technical improvements. The revolution in modern music has been due to the invention of new instruments entirely. The artist may trace the depressed revolution of Bunthorne simply to the

lack of technical means. So it has been with this romantic movement of ours. The painting of Burne-Jones shows a far more intricate wonder of design and splendour of colour than English imaginative art had ever shown before. The poetry of Morris, Rossetti and Swinburne shows a sustaining consciousness of the musical value of each word which Theophile Gautier's advice to the young poet, to read his dictionary every day as being the only book worth a poet's reading, admirably expresses. And yet, what people call the poet's inspiration has not lost its wings; but we have accustomed ourselves to count their innumerable pulsations, to estimate their limitless strength, and to govern their ungovernable freedom.

Whatever spiritual message an artist brings to his age, it is for us to do naught but accept his teaching. You have most of you seen probably that great masterpiece of Rubens which hangs in the gallery of Brussels, that swift and wonderful pageant of horse and rider, arrested in its most exquisite and fiery moment, when the winds are caught in crimson banner and the air is lit by the gleam of armour and the flash of plume. Well, that is joy in art, though that golden hillside be

trodden by the wounded feet of Christ; and it is for the death of the Son of Man that that gorgeous cavalcade is passing.

I know indeed that the divine prescience of beauty is not our inheritance. For such an informing and presiding spirit of art to shield us from all harsh and alien influences, we of the Teutonic and Saxon races must turn rather to that strained self-consciousness of the age which is the keynote of all our romantic art, and must be the source of all or nearly all our culture. I mean that intellectual curiosity of the nineteenth century which is always looking for the secret of the life that still lingers around old and bygone forms of culture. The truths of art cannot be taught. They are revealed only—revealed to natures which have made themselves receptive of all beautiful impressions by the study of and the worship of all beautiful things.

But you must not judge of æstheticism by the satire of Mr. Gilbert, any more than you judge of the strength and splendour of sun or sea by the dust that dances in the beam or the bubble that breaks on the wave. Don't take your critic as any

sure test of art. For artists, like the Greek gods, are only revealed to one another. As Emerson says somewhere, their real value and place time only can show. The true critic addresses not the artist ever, but the public. His work lies with them. Art can never have any other aim but her own perfection. I have no reverence, said Keats, for the public, or for anything in existence but the Eternal Being, the memory of great men, and the principle of beauty.

Such, then, is the spirit which I believe to be guiding and underlying our English Renaissance, a Renaissance many-sided and wonderful, promotive of strong ambitions and lofty personalities; yet for all its splendid achievements in poetry and the decorative arts, and in painting, for all the increased comeliness and grace of dress and of furniture of houses, not complete.

In its primary aspect a painting has no more spiritual message than an exquisite fragment of Venetian glass. The channels by which all noble and imaginative work in painting should touch the soul are not those of the truths of lives. This should be done by a certain inventive and creative handling entirely independent of anything defi-

nitely poetical in the subject, something entirely satisfying in itself, which is, as the Greeks would say, in itself an end. So the joy of poetry comes never from the subject, but from an inventive handling of rhythmical language.

The drama is the meeting place of art and life; it deals, as Mazzini said, not merely with man, but with social man, with man in relation to God and to humanity. It is the product of a period of great, national, united energy. It is impossible without a noble public, and it belongs to such ages as the age of Elizabeth, at London, Pericles, at Athens. It is part of such lofty moral and spiritual ardour as came to Greece after the defeat of the Persian fleet, and to Englishmen after the wreck of the Armada of Spain.

Shelley felt how incomplete our movement was in this respect, and has shown in one great tragedy by what terror and pity he would have pacified our age; but in spite of the "Cenci," the drama is one of the artistic forms through which the genius of England seeks in vain an outlet and an expression.

Love art for its own sake and then all things that you need will be added to you. This devotion to

beauty, and to the creation of beautiful things, is the test of all great civilisations; it is what makes the life of each citizen a sacrament and not a speculation. For beauty is the only thing that time cannot harm. Philosophies fall away like sand, creeds follow one another, but what is beautiful is a joy for all seasons, a possession for all eternity.

Art is the only empire which a nation's enemies cannot take from her. We in our Renaissance are seeking to create a sovereignty that will still be England's, when her yellow leopards have grown weary of wars, and the rose on her shield is crimsoned no more with the blood of battle. And you, too, absorbing into the heart of a great people this pervading artistic spirit, will create for yourselves such riches as you have never yet created, though your land be a network of railways, and your cities the harbours of the galleys of the world.

The reason we love the lily and the sunflower, in spite of what Mr. Gilbert may tell you, is not for any vegetable fashion at all; it is because these two lovely flowers are in England the two most perfect models of design, the most naturally adapted for decorative art—the gaudy leonine beauty of the one and the precious loveliness of the other giving

to the artist the most entire and perfect joy. And so with you: let there be no flower in your meadows that does not wreath its tendrils around your pillows, no little leaf in your Titan forests that does not lend its form to design, no curving spray of wild rose or briar that does not live forever in carven arch or window of marble, no bird in your air that is not giving the iridescent wonder of its colour, the exquisite curves of its wings in flight, to make more precious the preciousness of simple adornment; for the voices that have their dwelling in sea and mountain are not the chosen music of liberty only. Other messages are there in the wonder of wind-swept heights and the majesty of silent deep—messages that, if you will listen to them, will give you the wonder of all new imagination, the treasure of all new beauty. We spend our days, each one of us, in looking for the secret of life. Well, the secret of life is in art.

RISE OF HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

Historical criticism nowhere occurs as an isolated fact in the civilisation or literature of any people. It is part of that complex working towards freedom which may be described as the revolt against authority. It is merely one facet of that

speculative spirit of an innovation, which in the sphere of action produces democracy and revolution, and in that of thought, is the parent of philosophy and physical science; and its importance as a factor of progress is to be rested not so much on the results it attains to, as on the tone of thought which it represents, and the method by which it works.

All history must be essentially universal; not in the sense of comprising all the synchronous events of the past time, but through the universality of the principles employed. And the great conceptions which unify the work of Herodotus are such as even modern thought has not yet rejected. The immediate government of the world by God, the nemesis and punishment which sin and pride invariably bring with them, the revealing of God's purpose to His people by signs and omens, by miracles and by prophecy; these are to Herodotus the laws which govern the phenomena of history. He is essentially the type of the supernatural historian; his eyes are ever strained to discern the Spirit of God moving over the face of the waters of life; he is more concerned with final than with efficient causes.

History, no doubt, has splendid lessons for our instruction, just as all good art comes to us as the herald of the noblest truth. But to set before either the painter or the historian, the inculcation of moral lessons as an aim to be consciously pursued, is to entirely miss the true motive and characteristic of both art and history, which is in the one case the creation of beauty, in the other the discovery of the laws of the evolution of progress.

For the very first requisite for any scientific conception of history is the doctrine of uniform sequence: in other words, that certain events having happened, certain other events corresponding to them will happen also; that the past is the key of the future. Now, at the birth of this great conception science, it is true, presided, yet religion it was which at the outset clothed it in its own garb, and familiarised men with it by appealing to their hearts first and then to their intellects; knowing that at the beginning of things, it is through the moral nature, and not through the intellectual, that great truths are spread

At an early period in their intellectual development the Greeks reached that critical point in the

history of every civilised nation when speculation invades the domain of revealed truth, when the spiritual ideals of the people can no longer be satisfied by the lower, material conceptions of their inspired writers, and when men find it impossible to pour the new wine of free thought into the old bottles of a narrow and a trammelling creed.

From their Aryan ancestors they had received the fatal legacy of a mythology stained with immoral and monstrous stories which strove to hide the rational order of nature in a chaos of miracles, and to mar by imputed wickedness the perfection of God's nature—a very shirt of Nessus in which the Heracles of rationalism barely escaped annihilation. Now while undoubtedly the speculations of Thales, and the alluring analogies of law and order afforded by physical science, were most important forces in encouraging the rise of the spirit of scepticism, yet it was on its ethical side that the Greek mythology was chiefly open to attack.

It is difficult to shake the popular belief in miracles, but no man will admit sin and immortality as attributes of the Ideal he worships; so the first symptoms of a new order of thought are

shown in the passionate outcries of Xenophanes and Heraclitus against the evil things said by Homer of the sons of God; and in the story told by Pythagoras, how that he saw tortured in Hell the "two founders of Greek theology," we can recognise the rise of the "Aufklärung" as clearly as we see the Reformation foreshadowed in the "Inferno" of Dante.

Any honest belief, then, in the plain truth of these stories soon succumbed before the destructive effects of the *à priori* ethical criticism of this school; but the orthodox party, as is their custom, found immediately a convenient shelter under the ægis of the doctrine of metaphors and concealed meanings.

To this allegorical school the tale of the fight around the walls of Troy was a mystery, behind which, as behind a veil, were hidden certain moral and physical truths. The contest between Athena and Ares was that eternal contest between rational thought and the brute force of ignorance; the arrows which rattled in the quiver of the "Far Darter" were no longer the instruments of vengeance shot from the golden bow of the child of God, but the common rays of the sun, which was itself nothing but a mere inert mass of burning metal.

THE TRUTH OF MASKS.

The point, however, which I wish to emphasise is, not that Shakespeare appreciated the value of lovely costumes in adding picturesqueness to poetry, but that he saw how important costume is as a means of producing certain dramatic effects. He gives us directions about the costumes of *Perdita*, *Florizel*, *Autolycus*, the Witches in *Macbeth*, and the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, several elaborate descriptions of his fat knight, and a detailed account of the extraordinary garb in which *Petruchio* is to be married. *Rosalind*, he tells us, is tall, and is to carry a spear and a little dagger; *Celia* is smaller, and is to paint her face brown so as to look sunburnt. The children who play at fairies in *Windsor Forest* are to be dressed in white and green—a compliment, by the way, to *Queen Elizabeth*, whose favourite colours they were—and in white, with green garlands and gilded visors, the angels are to come to *Katharine* in *Kimbolton*. *Bottom* is in homespun, *Lysander* is distinguished from *Oberon* by his wearing an Athenian dress, and *Launce* has holes in his boots. The Duchess of Gloucester stands in a white sheet with her husband in mourning beside her. The motley of the Fool, the scarlet of the Cardinal, and

the French lilies broidered on the English coats, are all made occasion for jest or taunt in the dialogue. We know the patterns on the Dauphin's armour and the Pucelle's sword, the crest on Warwick's helmet, and the colour of Bardolph's nose. Portia has golden hair, Phœbe is black-haired, Orlando has chestnut curls, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek's hair hangs like flax on a distaff, and won't curl at all. Some of the characters are stout, some lean, some straight, some hunchbacked, some fair, some dark, and some are to blacken their faces. Lear has a white beard, Hamlet's father a grizzled, and Benedict is to shave his in the course of the play. Indeed, on the subject of stage beards, Shakespeare is quite elaborate; tells us of the many different colours in use, and gives a hint to actors to always see that their own are properly tied on. There is a dance of reapers in rye-straw hats, and of rustics in hairy coats like satyrs; a masque of Amazons, a masque of Russians, and a classical masque; several immortal scenes over a weaver in an ass's head, a riot over the colour of a coat which it takes the Lord Mayor of London to quell, and a scene between an infuriated husband and his wife's milliner about the slashing of a sleeve.

The flowers which Ophelia carries with her in her madness are as pathetic as the violets that blossom on a grave; the effect of Lear's wandering on the heath is intensified beyond words by his fantastic attire; and when Cloten, stung by the taunt of that simile which his sister draws from her husband's raiment, arrays himself in that husband's very garb to work upon her the deed of shame, we feel that there is nothing in the whole of modern French realism, nothing even in *Thérèse Raquin*, that masterpiece of horror, which for terrible and tragic significance can compare with this strange scene in *Cymbeline*.

Even small details of dress, such as the colour of a major-domo's stockings, the pattern on a wife's handkerchief, the sleeve of a young soldier, and a fashionable woman's bonnets, become in Shakespeare's hands points of actual dramatic importance, and by some of them the action of the play in question is conditioned absolutely. Many other dramatists have availed themselves of costume as a method of expressing directly to the audience the character of a person on his entrance, though hardly so brilliantly as Shakespeare has done in the case of the dandy Parolles, whose dress, by

the way, only an archæologist can understand; the fun of a master and servant exchanging coats in presence of the audience, of shipwrecked sailors squabbling over the division of a lot of fine clothes, and of a tinker dressed up like a duke while he is in his cups, may be regarded as part of that great career which costume has always played in comedy from the time of Aristophanes down to Mr. Gilbert; but nobody, from the mere details of apparel and adornment, has ever drawn such irony of contrast, such immediate and tragic effect, such pity and such pathos, as Shakespeare himself.

For in art there is no such thing as a universal truth. A Truth in art is that whose contradictory is also true. And just as it is only in art criticism, and through it, that we can apprehend the Platonic theory of ideas, so it is only in art criticism, and through it, that we can realise Hegel's system of contraries. The truths of metaphysics are the truths of masks.

Infessura tells us that in 1485 some workmen digging on the Appian Way came across an old Roman sarcophagus inscribed with the name "Julia, daughter of Claudius." On opening the coffer they found within its marble womb the

body of a beautiful girl of about fifteen years of age, preserved by the embalmer's skill from corruption and the decay of time. Her eyes were half open, her hair rippled round her in crisp, curling gold, and from her lips and cheek the bloom of maidenhood had not yet departed. Borne back to the Capitol, she became at once the centre of a new cult, and from all parts of the city crowded pilgrims to worship at the wonderful shrine, till the Pope, fearing lest those who had found the secret of beauty in a Pagan tomb might forget what secrets Judæa's rough and rock-hewn sepulchre contained, had the body conveyed away by night, and in secret buried. Legend though it may be, yet the story is none the less valuable as showing us the attitude of the Renaissance towards the antique world. Archæology, to them, was not a mere science for the antiquarian; it was a means by which they could touch the dry dust of antiquity into the very breath and beauty of life, and fill with the new wine of romanticism forms that else had been old and outworn.

Nor, again, is it enough that there should be accurate and appropriate costumes of beautiful colours: there must be also beauty of colour on the

stage as a whole, and as long as the background is painted by one artist, and the foreground figures independently designed by another, there is the danger of a want of harmony in the scene as a picture. For each scene the colour scheme should be settled as absolutely as for the decoration of a room, and the textures which it is proposed to use should be mixed and remixed in every possible combination, and what is discordant removed. Then, as regards the particular kinds of colours, the stage is often made too glaring, partly through the excessive use of hot, violent reds, and partly through the costumes looking too new. Shabbiness, which in modern life is merely the tendency of the lower orders towards tone, is not without its artistic value, and modern colours are often much improved by being a little faded. Blue also is too frequently used; it is not merely a dangerous colour to wear by gaslight, but it is really difficult in England to get a thoroughly good blue. The fine Chinese blue, which we all so much admire, takes two years to dye, and the English public will not wait so long for a colour. Peacock blue, of course, has been employed on the stage, notably at the Lyceum, with great advantage; but all attempts at a good light blue, or good dark

blue, which I have seen, have been failures. The value of black is hardly appreciated; it was used effectively by Mr. Irving in *Hamlet* as the central note of a composition, but as a tone-giving neutral its importance is not recognised. And this is curious, considering the general colour of the dress of a century in which, as Beaudelaire says, "Nous célébrons tous quelque enterrement." The archæologist of the future will probably point to this age as a time when the beauty of black was understood; but I hardly think that, as regards stage mounting or house decoration, it really is. Its decorative value is, of course, the same as that of white or gold; it can separate and harmonise colours. In modern plays the black frock coat of the hero becomes important in itself, and should be given a suitable background. But it rarely is. Indeed, the only good background for a play in modern dress which I have ever seen was the dark grey and cream-white scene of the first act of the *Princesse Georges* in Mrs. Langtry's production. As a rule, the hero is smothered in *bric-à-brac* and palm trees, lost in the gilded abyss of Louis Quatorze furniture, or reduced to a mere midge in the midst of marqueterie; whereas the background should always be kept as a background, and colour

subordinated to effect. This, of course, can only be done when there is one single mind directing the whole production. The facts of art are diverse, but the essence of artistic effect is unity. Monarchy, Anarchy, and Republicanism may contend for the government of nations: but a theatre should be in the power of a cultured despot. There may be division of labour, but there must be no division of mind. Whoever understands the costume of an age understands of necessity its architecture and its surroundings also, and it is easy to see from the chairs of a century whether it was a century of crinolines or not. In fact, in art there is no specialism, and a really artistic production should bear the impress of one master, and one master only, who not merely should design and arrange everything, but should have complete control over the way in which each dress is to be worn.

Mademoiselle Mars, in the first production of *Hernani*, absolutely refused to call her lover "*Mon Lion!*" unless she was allowed to wear a little fashionable *toque* then much in vogue on the Boulevards; and many young ladies on our own stage insist to the present day on wearing stiff starched petticoats under Greek dresses, to the entire ruin

of all delicacy of line and fold; but these wicked things should not be allowed. And there should be far more dress rehearsals than there are now. Actors such as Mr. Forbes-Robertson, Mr. Conway, Mr. George Alexander, and others, not to mention older artists, can move with ease and elegance in the attire of any century; but there are not a few who seem dreadfully embarrassed about their hands if they have no side pockets, and who always wear their dresses as if they were costumes. Costumes, of course, they are to the designer; but dresses they should be to those that wear them. And it is time that a stop should be put to the idea, very prevalent on the stage, that the Greeks and Romans always went about bareheaded in the open air—a mistake the Elizabethan managers did not fall into, for they gave hoods as well as gowns to their Roman senators.

In designing the scenery and costumes for any of Shakespeare's plays, the first thing the artist has to settle is the best date for the drama. This should be determined by the general spirit of the play, more than by any actual historical references which may occur in it. Most *Hamlets* I have seen were placed far too early. *Hamlet* is essentially a

scholar of the Revival of Learning; and if the allusion to the recent invasion of England by the Danes puts it back to the ninth century, the use of foils brings it down much later. Once, however, that the date has been fixed, then the archæologist is to supply us with the facts which the artist is to convert into effects.

It has been said that the anachronisms in the plays themselves show us that Shakespeare was indifferent to historical accuracy, and a great deal of capital has been made out of Hector's indiscreet quotation from Aristotle. Upon the other hand, the anachronisms are really few in number, and not very important, and, had Shakespeare's attention been drawn to them by a brother artist, he would probably have corrected them. For, though they can hardly be called blemishes, they are certainly not the great beauties of his work; or, at least, if they are, their anachronistic charm cannot be emphasised unless the play is accurately mounted according to its proper date. In looking at Shakespeare's plays as a whole, however, what is really remarkable is their extraordinary fidelity as regards his personages and his plots. Many of his *dramatis personæ* are people who actually existed, and some of them might have been seen

in real life by a portion of his audience. Indeed, the most violent attack that was made on Shakespeare in his time was for his supposed caricature of Lord Cobham. As for his plots, Shakespeare constantly draws them either from authentic history, or from the old ballads and traditions which served as history to the Elizabethan public, and which, even now, no scientific historian would dismiss as absolutely untrue. And not merely did he select fact instead of fancy as the basis of much of his imaginative work, but he always gives to each play the general character, the social atmosphere in a word, of the age in question. Stupidity he recognises as one of the permanent characteristics of all European civilisations, so he sees no difference between a London mob of his own day and a Roman mob of Pagan days, between a silly watchman in Messina and a silly Justice of the Peace in Windsor. But when he deals with higher characters, with those exceptions of each age which are so fine that they become its types, he gives them absolutely the stamp and seal of their time. Virgilia is one of those Roman wives on whose tomb was written "*Domi mansit, lanam fecit,*" as surely as Juliet is the romantic girl of the Renaissance. He is even true to the characteristics of

race. Hamlet has all the imagination and irresolution of the Northern nations, and the Princess Katharine is as entirely French as the heroine of *Divorçons*. Harry the Fifth is a pure Englishman, and Othello a true Moor.

Again, when Shakespeare treats of the history of England from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, it is wonderful how careful he is to have his facts perfectly right—indeed, he follows Holinshed with curious fidelity. The incessant wars between France and England are described with extraordinary accuracy down to the names of the besieged towns, the ports of landing and embarkation, the sites and dates of the battles, the titles of the commanders on each side, and the lists of the killed and wounded. And as regards the Civil Wars of the Roses, we have many elaborate genealogies of the seven sons of Edward the Third; the claims of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster to the throne are discussed at length; and if the English aristocracy will not read Shakespeare as a poet, they should certainly read him as a sort of early Peerage. There is hardly a single title in the Upper House, with the exception, of course, of the uninteresting titles assumed by the law lords, which does not appear in Shake-

speare, along with many details of family history, creditable and discreditable. Indeed, if it be really necessary that the School Board children should know all about the Wars of the Roses, they could learn their lessons just as well out of Shakespeare as out of shilling primers, and learn them, I need not say, far more pleasurably. Even in Shakespeare's own day this use of his plays was recognised. "The historical plays teach history to those who cannot read it in the chronicles," says Heywood in a tract about the stage, and yet I am sure that sixteenth-century chronicles were much more delightful reading than nineteenth-century primers are.

Of course, the æsthetic value of Shakespeare's plays does not, in the slightest degree, depend on their facts, but on Truth, and Truth is independent of facts always, inventing or selecting them at pleasure. But still Shakespeare's use of facts is a most interesting part of his method of work, and shows us his attitude towards the stage, and his relations to the great art of illusion. Indeed, he would have been very much surprised at any one classing his plays with "fairy tales," as Lord Lytton does; for one of his aims was to create for England a national historical drama, which should

deal with incidents with which the public was well acquainted, and with heroes that lived in the memory of a people. Patriotism, I need hardly say, is not a necessary quality of art; but it means, for the artist the substitution of a universal for an individual feeling, and for the public the presentation of a work of art in a most attractive and popular form. It is worth noticing that Shakespeare's first and last successes were both historical plays.

It may be asked what has this to do with Shakespeare's attitude towards costume. I answer that a dramatist who laid such stress on historical accuracy of fact would have welcomed historical accuracy of costume as a most important adjunct to his illusionist method. And I have no hesitation in saying that he did so. The reference to helmets in the period in the prologue to *Henry the Fifth* may be considered fanciful, though Shakespeare must have often seen

The very casque
That did affright the air at Agincourt,

where it still hangs in the dusky gloom of Westminster Abbey, along with the saddle of that "imp of fame," and the dinted shield with its torn blue

velvet lining and its tarnished lilies of gold; but the use of military tabards in *Henry the Sixth* is a bit of pure archæology, as they were not worn in the sixteenth century; and the King's own tabard, I may mention, was still suspended over his tomb in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in Shakespeare's day. For, up to the time of the unfortunate triumph of the Philistines in 1645, the chapels and cathedrals of England were the great national museums of archæology, and in them was kept the armour and attire of the heroes of English history. A good deal was, of course, preserved in the Tower, and even in Elizabeth's day tourists were brought there to see such curious relics of the past as Charles Brandon's huge lance, which is still, I believe, the admiration of our country visitors; but the cathedrals and churches were, as a rule, selected as the most suitable shrines for the reception of the historic antiquities. Canterbury can still show us the helm of the Black Prince, Westminster the robes of our kings, and in old St. Paul's the very banner that had waved on Bosworth field was hung up by Richmond himself.

In fact, everywhere that Shakespeare turned in London he saw the apparel and appurtenances of

past ages, and it is impossible to doubt that he made use of his opportunities. The employment of lance and shield, for instance, in actual warfare, which is so frequent in his plays, is drawn from archæology, and not from the military accoutrements of his day; and his general use of armour in battle was not a characteristic of his age, a time when it was rapidly disappearing before firearms. Again, the crest on Warwick's helmet, of which such a point is made in *Henry the Sixth*, is absolutely correct in a fifteenth-century play, when crests were generally worn, but would not have been so in a play of Shakespeare's own time, when feathers and plumes had taken their place—a fashion which, as he tells us in *Henry the Eighth*, was borrowed from France. For the historical plays, then, we may be sure that archæology was employed, and as for the others, I feel certain it was the case also. The appearance of Jupiter on his eagle, thunderbolt in hand; of Juno, with her peacocks, and of Iris with her many-coloured bow; the Amazon masque and the masque of the Five Worthies, may all be regarded as archæological; and the vision which Posthumus sees in prison of Sicilius Leonatus—"an old man, attired like a warrior, leading an ancient matron"—is clearly so.

THE TEACHER OF WISDOM.

From his childhood he had been as one filled with the perfect knowledge of God, and even while he was yet but a lad many of the saints, as well as certain holy women who dwelt in the free city of his birth, had been stirred to much wonder by the grave wisdom of his answers.

And when his parents had given him the robe and the ring of manhood he kissed them, and left them, and went out into the world, that he might speak to the world about God. For there were at that time many in the world who either knew not God at all, or had but an incomplete knowledge of Him, or worshipped the false gods who dwell in groves and have no care of their worshippers.

And he set his face to the sun and journeyed, walking without sandals, as he had seen the saints walk, and carrying at his girdle a leathern wallet and a little water-bottle of burnt clay.

And as he walked along the highway he was full of the joy that comes from the perfect knowledge of God, and he sang praises unto God without ceasing: and after a time he reached a strange land in which there were many cities.

And he passed through eleven cities. And some

of these cities were in valleys, and others were by the banks of great rivers, and others were set on hills. And in each city he found a disciple who loved him and followed him, and a great multitude of people also followed him from each city, and the knowledge of God spread in the whole land, and many of the rulers were converted, and the priests of the temples in which there were idols found that half of their gain was gone, and when they beat upon their drums at noon, none, or but a few, came with peacocks or with offerings of flesh, as had been the custom of the land before his coming.

Yet the more the people followed him, and the greater the number of his disciples, the greater became his sorrow. And he knew not why his sorrow was so great. For he spoke ever about God, and out of the fulness of that perfect knowledge of God which God had Himself given to him.

And one evening he passed out of the eleventh city, which was a city of Armenia, and his disciples and a great crowd followed after him: and he went up on to a mountain, and sat down on a rock that was on the mountain, and his disciples stood round him, and the multitude knelt in the valley.

And he bowed his head on his hands and wept,

and said to his soul: "Why is it that I am full of sorrow and fear, and that each of my disciples is an enemy that walks in the noonday?"

And his soul answered him and said: "God filled thee with the perfect knowledge of Himself, and thou hast given this knowledge away to others. The pearl of great price thou hast divided, and the vesture without seam thou hast parted asunder. He who giveth away wisdom robbeth himself. He is as one who giveth his treasure to a robber. Is not God wiser than thou art? Who art thou to give away the secret that God hath told thee? I was rich once, and thou hast made me poor. Once I saw God, and now thou hast hidden Him from me."

And he wept again, for he knew that his soul spake truth to him, and that he had given to others the perfect knowledge of God, and that he was as one clinging to the skirts of God, and that his faith was leaving him by reason of the number of those who believed in him.

And he said to himself: "I will talk no more about God. He who giveth away wisdom robbeth himself."

And after the space of some hours his disciples came near him and bowed themselves to the ground

and said: "Master, talk to us about God, for thou hast the perfect knowledge of God, and no man save thee hath this knowledge."

And he answered them and said: "I will talk to you about all other things that are in Heaven and on earth, but about God I will not talk to you. Neither now, nor at any time, will I talk to you about God."

And they were wroth with him, and said to him: "Thou hast led us into the desert that we might hearken to thee. Wilt thou send us away hungry, and the great multitude that thou hast made to follow thee?"

And he answered them and said: "I will not talk to you about God."

And the multitude murmured against him, and said to him: "Thou hast led us into the desert and hast given us no food to eat. Talk to us about God and it will suffice us."

But he answered them not a word. For he knew that if he spake to them about God he would give away his treasure.

And his disciples went away sadly, and the multitude of people returned to their own homes. And many died on the way.

And when he was alone he rose up and set his

face to the moon, and journeyed for seven moons, speaking to no man nor making any answer. And when the seventh moon had waned he reached that desert which is the desert of the Great River. And having found a cavern in which a centaur had once dwelt, he took it for his place of dwelling, and made himself a mat of reeds on which to lie, and became a Hermit. And every hour the Hermit praised God that He had suffered him to keep some knowledge of Him and of His wonderful greatness.

Now one evening as the Hermit was seated before the cavern in which he had made his place of dwelling, he beheld a young man of evil and beautiful face who passed by in mean apparel and with empty hands. Every evening with empty hands the young man passed by, and every morning he returned with his hands full of purple and pearls. He was a robber, and robbed the caravans of the merchants.

And the Hermit looked at him and pitied him. But he spoke not a word. For he knew that he who speaks a word loses his faith.

And one morning, as the young man returned with his hands full of purple and pearls, he stopped and frowned and stamped his foot upon the sand,

and said to the Hermit: "Why do you look at me ever in this manner as I pass by? What is it that I see in your eyes? For no man has looked at me before in this manner. And the thing is a thorn and a trouble to me."

And the Hermit answered him and said: "What you see in my eyes is pity. Pity is what looks out at you from my eyes."

And the young man laughed with scorn, and cried to the Hermit in a bitter voice, and said to him: "I have purple and pearls in my hands, and you have but a mat of reeds on which to lie. What pity should you have for me? And for what reason have you this pity?"

"I have pity for you," said the Hermit, "because you have no knowledge of God."

"Is this knowledge of God a precious thing?" asked the young man, and he came close to the mouth of the cavern.

"It is more precious than all the purple and pearls of the whole world," answered the Hermit.

"And have you got it?" said the young Robber, and he came closer still.

"Once indeed," answered the Hermit, "I possessed the perfect knowledge of God. But in my foolishness I parted with it, and divided it amongst

others. Yet even now is such knowledge as remains to me more precious than purple or pearls."

And when the young Robber heard this he threw away the purple and the pearls that he was bearing in his hands, and drawing a sharp sword of curved steel, he said to the Hermit: "Give me, forthwith, this knowledge of God that you possess, or I will surely slay you. Wherefore should I not slay him who has a treasure greater than my treasure?"

And the Hermit spread out his arms and said: "Were it not better for me to go unto the uttermost courts of God and praise Him, than to live in the world and have no knowledge of Him? Slay me if that be your desire. But I will not give away my knowledge of God."

And the young Robber knelt down, and besought him, but the Hermit would not talk to him about God, nor give him his treasure, and the young Robber rose up and said to the Hermit: "Be it as you will. As for myself, I will go to the City of the Seven Sins, that is but three days' journey from this place, and for my purple they will give me pleasure, and for my pearls they will sell me joy." And he took up the purple and the pearls and went swiftly away.

And the Hermit cried out and followed him and besought him. For the space of three days he followed the young Robber on the road and entreated him to return, nor to enter the City of the Seven Sins.

And ever and anon the young Robber looked back at the Hermit and called to him, and said: "Will you give me this knowledge of God which is more precious than purple and pearls? If you will give me that, I will not enter the City."

And ever did the Hermit answer: "All things that I have, I will give thee, save that one thing only. For that thing it is not lawful for me to give away."

And in the twilight of the third day they came nigh to the great scarlet gates of the City of the Seven Sins. And from the City there came the sound of much laughter.

And the young Robber laughed in answer, and sought to knock at the gate. And as he did so, the Hermit ran forward and caught him by the skirts of his raiment and said to him: "Stretch forth your hands, and set your arms around my neck, and put your ear close to my lips, and I will give you what remains to me of the knowledge of God."

And the young Robber stopped.

And when the Hermit had given away his knowledge of God he fell upon the ground and wept, and a great darkness hid him from the City and the young Robber, so that he saw them no more.

And as he lay there weeping he was aware of One who was standing beside him; and He who was standing beside him had feet of brass and hair like fine wool. And He raised the Hermit up, and said to him: "Before this time thou hadst the perfect knowledge of God. Now thou shalt have the perfect love of God. Wherefore art thou weeping?"

And He kissed him.

WILDE V. WHISTLER.

For there are not many arts, but one art merely: poem, picture, and Parthenon, sonnet and statue—all are in their essence the same, and he who knows one, knows all. But the poet is the supreme artist, for he is the master of colour and form, and the real musician besides, and is lord over all life and all arts; and so to the poet, beyond all others, are these mysteries known; to Edgar Allan Poe and to Baudelaire, not to Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche.

THE DISCIPLE.

When Narcissus died, the pool of his pleasure changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears, and the Oreads came weeping through the woodland that they might sing to the pool and give it comfort.

And when they saw that the pool had changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears, they loosened the green tresses of their hair, and cried to the pool, and said: "We do not wonder that you should mourn in this manner for Narcissus, so beautiful was he."

"But was Narcissus beautiful?" said the pool.

"Who should know better than you?" answered the Oreads. "Us did he ever pass by, but you he sought for, and would lie on your banks and look down at you, and in the mirror of your waters he would mirror his own beauty."

And the pool answered: "But I loved Narcissus because, as he lay on my banks and looked down at me, in the mirror of his eyes I saw my own beauty mirrored."

Correspondence.



CORRESPONDENCE.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS
% LYRISTES, LONDON.

LYRIC CLUB.
W.

Dear Mr. Johnson

I was so
sorry I could
not get back,
to see you
again, but I
was obliged to
be there to

see the resignation
 of some suggestion
 I had made,
 and could not
 get away till
 just before my
 train started.

I Love you

will let me
know when you
are in Town -
I like your
poetry - the little
I have seen of
it - so much,
that I want
to know the

poet as well.

It was very

kind of you getting

up to see me.

I was determined

to meet you

before I left

Oxford.

Believe
yours very truly
Oscar Wilde.

10 & 11, ST. JAMES'S PLACE,
S.W.

my Dear Friend.

Thank you
so much.

I wish I
could have heard
your lecture

I am sending
you some photographs.

Pray keep
one for yourself.

and return the
others to the
Photographer.

Do publish
your lecture. I
want to read
it.

why don't
you come to.

London ? I
 want to talk
 to you. to see
 you, - to know
 you -

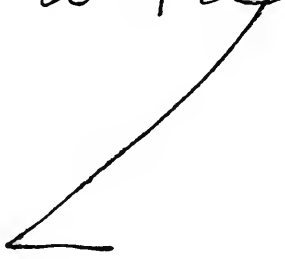
To. really
 know a brother
 I must touch
 his hand.

Not Christ
 alone, but all
 the gods, here

to become incarnate
before they can
reveal themselves.

I think of
you - and
am always with
affection your
friend and brother.

Oscar Wilde





Clumber
nr. Worksop

Dear Henriette

I was
a little annoyed
with you for
repeating to
Alice something
mamma had
said to you

It gave
mamma a
great deal
of bother —
However, that
is long
No.

we are too
our friends
to be and.

constant
and I must
come soon

Saturday

Every to see

Even note.


Yours truly
Oscar Wilde

✓

Hotel d'Alsace
Rue de Bruxelles
Paris

Dear Mother,

Aggie Turner - 2
Clarence Inn - tall
he has not yet
received his copy of
the play - Sarah
I signed one
under a distinct
I like to hear of
for tomorrow and
Glad to hear of
F. B. C.


 Niagara. gr. my. 1881
 Dear Mrs. Hawthorne
 I am so sorry not
 to see you when I was
 at Boston but I had
 so little time there
 I was unable to go
 over to Concord. When
 I return I must see
 you, and the allots.
 if they will let me.
 Mrs. Hall is kind
 enough to ask me for
 Sunday evening but I
 could not go. On my
 return to New York I
 must visit her.
 Oscar Wilde

my dear Boyle O'Reilly,
 Not hearing from
 "you till late I dine
 out & do not set
 away. Could you come
 round of your home
 time to spare - I leave
 at seven o'clock for
 Bangor.

Vernon
 Hall.

Yours
 faithfully

Dear Biogle.

As far as
I can make
~~out~~ I remain
in Boston

tonight so am
at your service
Ever.

Oscar Wilde

16. TITE STREET,
'CHELSEA.S.W.

Dear Tristram,

Come in at
Lea. time tomorrowth if
you have nothing better
~~to do~~ - what dreadfull
hours we kept the
other night!

Yours

W. C. W. W.

+

thursd.

Charles
 Davenport
 10

9.

Dear Mr. Davenport Adams
 I have been
 too busy - and really
 said my say in my lecture
 at Derby
 But some day
 I will be very glad
 to send you
 some notes of the
 artistic qualities - or
 want of them - in
 English manufacturing and
 their work.

I was very pleased
to have the opportunity
of meeting you. I hope
not the last time -

Yours very truly
Oscar Wilde

1 Merrion Square. W.
Dublin

Dear Sir

Accept my thanks
for your letter and its
Enclosure. I esteem it
a great honour that
the first American paper
I appear in should be
your admirable "Pilot".

I send you two
Magazines with contents
of mine which perhaps
you might like to
reprint, or notice; they
are quite at your
disposal.

I hope always

to be able to keep up
my connection with
the Pilot.

Lady Wilde
sends you her compliments
and best wishes.

Believe me
Truly yours
Oscar Wilde

16 Tit Street
W.

Dear madam,

I think the
idea of your
anthology is
praised most
charming, &
it will give

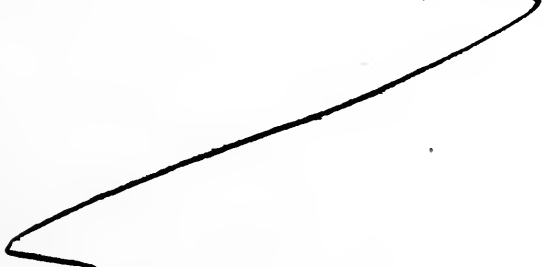
me great
 pleasure to find
 any stanza of
 mine included
 in a book so
 golden and
 gracious as
 yours. Well, be
 without doubt.

Pray Take from
my own work
what pleases

you, ~

Believe

Yours faithfully
Oscar Wilde



~~ALBEMARLE CLUB.~~

~~13. ALBEMARLE STREET W.~~

16 T. to Street.
Sv.

Thank you so
much for the
lecture and for
your photograph.
They have both
interested me
so

much, as the
 lecture is full
 of beautiful
 things - you
 approved deep
 too - a holy
 human
 standpoint:
 you sympathizing

are wide and
 vital and your
 instinct : sure I
 seen.

The lecture, I
 fear, could not be
 published, on
 account of the
 long quotations -
 my publishing
 were

not alone
 such long
 excerpts, as the
 play is to be
 translated in
 may.

The
 Oscar Wilde

LYRIC CLUB
W.

16 Tite Street
Chelsea.

Dear V. / Stockholm

Will you

send V. / with
love to Tex

Tommy / Wednesday
at 5.00 p.

as it is
 our day out
 Love. ?

It is a
 ✓ please
 meet you
 for and
 by chance

is only the
we have
long time

Believe

Yours

Wilde

Wilde

Buenos Aires, Aug.

Monday 23. '97.

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for

mail 18th. The great sweetness

of the letters is

shown me during your stay

at Buenos Aires. I look to

see you again soon, with


in London or Paris - and
to have before the door
nothing good in art.

I had a charming
letter from you last
evening, and look forward
to seeing him on Saturday.

Believe me,
very sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

~~ALBEMARLE CLUB.~~

~~13. ALBEMARLE STREET W.~~

16 Tit Street


Dear Sir —

I will

send you a m.s.

copy of my play —

a little incomplete.

but still, I hope.

to give you an
 idea of the
 official scheme -
 your letter has
 deeply moved
 me - To the
 work I am,
 by intention or
 by part, a
 dilettante and
 doubly needy -

it is not wise
 to have one's heart
 to the world, and
 as seriousness of
 manner is the
 disguise of the
 fool, ~~and~~ boldly
 in its exquisite
 modes of triviality
 and indifference
 and lack of care,
 is the robe of
 the wise man.

It is very an, all
is this the all
new making :

But write to
me about yourself.
tell me your life
as lovely - as
~~well~~ ~~the same~~ ~~happy~~ ~~for~~
wonderful. Who are
you? — what do
difficulties get to
for any one but to
answer! / I, at
any rate, am
your friend
Dorothy Child

AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT.

Elder. Tree, there stands a neglected grave. The grass grows thick and rank around it, and the weeds have covered it all over. No bird ever sings there, and even the sunbeams seem to avoid the spot. Yet in that lonely grave the most beautiful woman in the world lies asleep. Her throat is like a reed of ivory, and her mouth is like a ripe pomegranate. Like threads of fine gold are the threads of her flowing hair, and the turquoise is not so blue as her blue eyes. She is fairer than the Star of Evening when he rises from the deep sea, fairer than the Morning Star when he comes robed in silver upon the hill-tops. The living grow old, but she is always young. She lies in her narrow bed, and is at peace. Surely Beauty is a wonderful thing.

'I have seen her,' cried the mole, 'I have seen her, but her beauty has galled me into dust. Nothing is left of it but her golden hair. This has grown, and grown, and grown till she lies in a shroud of gold.'



